





# LORD OF ALL REALMS

BOOK 01

*Ni Cang Tian*

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

# Lord of All Realms

(Jue Dui Xuan Xiang)

(绝对选项)

by

## Pear Lands In The Autumn Spring

(梨落秋溪)

# Synopsis

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In ancient times, there existed giant spirits capable of supporting the heavens. With bodies as enormous as stars, they soared across the universe. Great clan leaders with mysterious blood running through their veins shattered the void and created new worlds. Ancient Qi Warriors crossed a river of stars to enlighten numerous mortal beings. For unknown reasons, an era silently came to an end, all realms were separated, ancient giant spirits disappeared one after another. Thousands of years later, young Nie Tian managed to travel back into ancient times with the help of a drop of blood...

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English Translation by Rex @ [Wuxia World](#)

Translation Edits by Lucas @ [Wuxia World](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

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# Chapter 1: An Unstable Situation

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Black Cloud City. The Nie clan.

As night fell, the plainly dressed Nie Qian leaned against the windowsill and stared at an artificial hill outside her window as her mind wandered.

Inside the room, Nie Tian, who just turned one, impatiently pushed away his wet nurse. Mouth stained with milk, but eyes fixed on Nie Qian, he mumbled, "Meat, must eat meat..."

His wet nurse, Zhou Ma, became embarrassed and chuckled, "Miss, look..."

Nie Qian snapped back to reality and gave the adorable yet strong Nie Tian an intense glare before she jokingly taunted, "This little bastard has already had two bowls of ground meat today but shows no interest in his milk. Now he wants more meat. I don't even know if he can properly digest it."

"Meat, need meat..." Nie Tian was still jabbering with a smile on his face.

Nie Tian's charming smile reminded Nie Qian of her late younger sister. Feeling a bit soft-hearted, she nodded to Zhou Ma.

Zhou Ma then brought out a bowl of finely ground meat and laid it on the table. Nie Tian's ink-black pupils immediately flashed.

Then he grabbed a spoon and started deftly digging in, his chubby little face filled with satisfaction.

Hearing Nie Tian eating caused Nie Qian to feel bothered for no apparent reason. "Little Yue, how many kids are going to attend the drawing of lots tomorrow?"

Nie Qian popped the question abruptly.

The servant girl, Han Yue, who was standing by the door, hesitated and softly replied, "Miss, all the one-year-old babies in the Nie clan surnamed Nie will attend. Once every five years, immortals from Cloudsoaring Mountain will bring spiritual tools to reward the Nie clan for their hard work over the years. No parent of a one-year-old child would want to pass up that opportunity."

The Nie clan was notable in Black Cloud City. However, this world respected the powerful Qi warriors above all else. Almost every mortal clan offered service to them. The Nie clan was no exception.

The Qi warrior sect that the Nie clan clung to was the Cloudsoaring sect, which was located on Cloudsoaring Mountain not far from Black Cloud City. At the heart of Cloudsoaring Mountain, there was an abundance of Fire Stones, which were a low-ranked type of spiritual material that Qi practitioners used to improve their cultivation. The Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect were busy with cultivation all year long, and thus, unwilling to waste time on extracting the low-ranked Fire Stones themselves, they had members of the Nie clan do it for them.

Generation after generation, the Nie clan had offered the extracted Fire Stones as tribute to the Cloudsoaring sect in exchange for their protection.

Additionally, other than protecting the Nie clan from oppression from other families in Black Cloud City, Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect would also bring low-ranked spiritual tools to the Nie clan every five years in order to test the cultivation potential of the Nie children through the drawing of lots.

Upon birth, every child would possess a somewhat special attribute, like metal, wood, water, fire, or earth. Some children would carry rare attributes, like lightning, electricity, wind, cloud, or frost. Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect would bring a number of low-ranked spiritual tools that possessed the different attributes.

The children and spiritual tools that shared the same attributes would be drawn to each other. In this way, a child's attribute could be determined, and then his parents could provide well-directed assistance and help the youngster achieve twice the result with half the effort.

Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect would trade those low-ranked spiritual tools for the Nie clan's loyalty, so all the spiritual tools brought to lot drawing would be gifted to the children with matching attributes.

Though useless to the Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect, those



low-ranked spiritual tools would be of great help to the Nie children's cultivation and become a suitable spiritual tool for a long time.

That was why the whole Nie clan would seethe with excitement at the lot drawings that would only happen once every five years. Every parent with a one-year-old child would consider it to be the most significant moment of that child's life, and would be drawn to the event like a vulture to flesh.

This time was no different.

Nie Qian frowned. "Answer me, how many kids are going to attend this time?"

"Seven," Han Yue replied softly, bowing her head deeply.

"Little Tian is exactly one year old and is surnamed Nie," Nie Qian said coldly. "Why didn't anyone inform me to bring Nie Tian to this lot-drawing convention?"

"Miss..." Han Yue forced a smile as she looked up at Nie Qian and said in a low voice, "Nie Tian is the child of your younger sister, but she is... just like you, a girl, and she didn't mention who Nie Tian's father was before she passed away."

"According to the rules of the Nie clan, only the children of legitimate sons have the right to attend the lot-drawing conventions every five years. Children of the daughters of the clan

have no such right."

"I don't care about those rules," spat Nie Qian. "My father is still the head of this clan. I'm gonna go reason with him right now!" Then she stormed out of the room.

As Nie Qian left, Han Yue murmured to herself, "Your father is currently the head of the clan, but his position...isn't stable!"

A moment later.

Nie Qian barged into Nie Donghai's pavilion and yelled indignantly, "Father, Nie Tian is ..."

She suddenly stopped.

Inside the dimly lit room, Nie Donghai, the current head of the clan, had nothing but exhaustion written across his pale, yellow face. His originally mighty body had turned into a bag of bones. He was currently stooped against the wall, his eyes focused on a red medicinal pill in his left hand. He seemed to be wavering back and forth regarding something important.

Nie Qian's outraged heart was suddenly filled with sadness.

"Father, don't," she said gently.

She recognized the medicinal pill in Nie Donghai's hand with a

single glance. It was a Soul Restoration Pill. With its help, a Qi warrior would appear to be full of spiritual energy and vigor for a short period of time, but it was merely temporary.

Soul Restoration Pills would drain a Qi practitioner's potential and longevity, and the user would be greatly damaged physically and mentally afterwards.

Generally, a Qi warrior would only resort to taking it when it was a matter of life and death. No one dared to use it under normal circumstances.

Nie Donghai, who had been staring at the Soul Restoration Pill in his hand, saw Nie Qian come in. He forced a smile and said bitterly, "Ever since I was seriously wounded by the Yun clan and the Yuan clan, my sea of Qi was damaged and my spiritual energy has started leaking faster than I can replace it. There is no chance of my cultivation base reaching Anterior Heaven level. Even my current cultivation level... well, I'm not sure how much longer I can maintain it.

"Second Brother and Third Brother have been after my position as head of the clan for a long time. I've thought this through. The Cloudsoaring sect is going to send people over tomorrow. If they saw such a drop in my cultivation, then with Second Brother and Third Brother stirring up the situation, I'm afraid I would have no choice but to hand over my position."

"Father, I'd rather you retire than drain your longevity to keep your position as head of the clan." Nie Qian's eyes welled up with tears.

"What do you know?!" Nie Donghai gave her a hard look, with seriousness and anger written all over his face. "We'll only have a chance to seek justice for the ill treatment you've received from the Yun clan if I'm the head of the Nie clan! Also, regarding the person who tricked your sister, it is only possible to find out his identity when I have the Nie clan's power under my command!"

"If I step down, there is absolutely no way that Second Brother and Third Brother will avenge you and your sister! I have to keep this position till the day I die, for you and Jin'er!"

"What does it matter if I live a few years less? Once I step down, I will no longer be able to fight for you. How is that different from dying?"

"Father!" Nie Qian choked on her own tears.

"Alright. Don't behave like an immature child. Tell me. Why were you in a hurry to find me?" Nie Donghai took a deep breath and restored his firm look.

"Father," Nie Qian pleaded. "Tomorrow's lot-drawing convention is of great importance. Since you gave Little Tian the family name 'Nie', I hope that Little Tian can participate. If he could find a suitable spiritual tool on the lot-drawing convention, it would greatly benefit his future cultivation. With its help, he might be able to reach the ninth level of the Qi Refining stage by the age of fifty and be admitted to the Cloudsoaring sect."

"About this matter..." Nie Donghai seemed to be in a dilemma. "How could I not be aware of the situation? I talked to Second Brother and Third Brother about this long ago, but they were fixed on the fact that Little Tian wasn't a legitimate son of the Nie clan and insisted on refusing to allow him to participate, which is in accordance with clan rules."

"Father, you are reaching the end of your cultivation path. Little sister is no longer with us. And as for me... my life has no hope of changing for the better." Our branch of the clan is not well populated, and with Little Tian being the only male, I hope you can fight for him." Nie Qian's eyes were filled with tears.

Nie Donghai remained silent for a while before he nodded. "I understand. Go. Take Nie Tian to attend the lot drawing tomorrow."

Although Nie Qian's eyes glistened with tears, they also showed a hint of happiness before she bowed and left.

As she stepped out of the room, Nie Qian heard Nie Donghai swallowing the Soul Restoration Pill and letting out a long sigh.

Nie Qian felt a heart-wrenching pain, knowing her arrival helped Nie Donghai make up his mind. She couldn't bear to look back and rushed away as quickly as possible.

## Chapter 2: Lot-Drawing Convention

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The next day....

The great hall of the Nie clan was full of excited people, and the atmosphere was quite bustling.

Liu Yan, from the Cloudsoaring sect, was surrounded by a crowd of Nie clan members of all ages. They showed great concern for him by asking about his well-being, hoping to win his favor and thus giving their children or grandchildren a slightly better chance of being admitted to the Cloudsoaring sect.

Liu Yan was wearing a grey robe, and a hint of smile could be seen at the corner of his mouth. He was in the seat of honor, chatting to nearby Nie clan members with a bit impatience in his eyes.

From the start to the end, Liu Yan never stood up; the surrounding members of Nie clan kept bowing in an extremely humble manner.

One by one, members of the Nie clan brought in their one-year-old children through the gate of the hall.

Every comer would take their child to greet Liu Yan and make a introduction to him with their face full of smiles. Only after that would they greet and pay respect to the three elders of the Nie clan, who were seated beside Liu Yan.

Nie Donghai, together with his second brother Nie Beichuan and third brother Nie Nanshan, didn't try to flatter and please Liu Yan due to their special status. But every time they met his gaze, they would also wear their brightest smiles.

Unlike the day before, Nie Donghai looked radiant and energetic, with absolutely no evidence of injuries.

"Nie Qian? What did you bring Nie Tian here for?" These sudden, ill-timed words came from Nie Lan, who had introduced his son to Liu Yan moments ago. He furrowed his eyebrows as he looked unhappily towards the gate of the hall.

Nie Lan was Nie Beichuan's son. While he was the oldest among the second generation of the Nie clan, his cultivation talent was quite poor. He had only reached the ninth level of Qi Refining and hadn't been able to break through the bottleneck and enter the Lesser Heaven stage.

For this reason, he had long since given up his own cultivation and placed all his hope in his three sons.

At present, his first son, who was only eleven years old, had reached the seventh level of Qi Refining. As long as he could reach the ninth level in the next four years, he would win the Cloudsoaring sect's favor and become their disciple. With the Cloudsoaring sect's help, he would eventually be able to reach the Lesser Heaven stage and live a bright future.

His second son, who was six, also showed outstanding cultivation talent by achieving the fourth level of Qi Refining. A promising future was in store.

Today he brought his third son Nie Hong, who had just turned one.

The births of his three children had been carefully calculated so that every one of them happened to be at the proper age to attend the quinquennial lot-drawings. Both of the elder sons had made remarkable gains during the last two lot-drawings.

It was Nie Hong's turn this time.

As Nie Lan spoke, all the eyes of the Nie clan members inside the hall became fixed on Nie Qian and Nie Tian, who had just passed through the gate.

"Eldest brother," Nie Qian said loudly. "I've brought Nie Tian to attend this year's lot-drawing convention."

Nie Tian was standing by her side, as adorable and strong as a tiger cub. Not only was he taller than the other children in attendance, but he also seemed more muscular.

In spite of the volume of her voice, Nie Qian looked a bit uneasy under everyone's scolding stares.

Nie Tian, on the contrary, was full of smiles, completely unaware of all the eyes glaring at them with ill intentions. Instead, he



seemed to be enjoying being the center of attention, and didn't flinch an inch.

"Nie Tian?" Nie Lan snorted disdainfully. He didn't look very happy. "His family name is Nie, but it is only because we have no idea who his father is. In fact, he isn't a true Nie at all. According to the Nie clan rules, a daughter's son shouldn't be qualified to attend lot-drawing conventions. Don't make trouble out of nothing. Just take Nie Tian and leave. Stop wasting Mr. Liu Yan's and everybody else's time."

Nie Qian immediately turned to Nie Donghai. "Father!"

"It doesn't matter who my son-in-law is," Nie Donghai replied forcefully. "Jin'er said before she died that Nie Tian's father was willing to take our surname and join our clan, hence Nie Tian is a descendant of the Nie clan."

"Eldest brother," Nie Nanshan said with a dark smile, "As far as I remember, you itched to eat that man alive. You used to talk all the time about killing him at all costs once you found him. How come you've changed your attitude all of a sudden and admitted his status as your son-in-law? Plus, to take our surname... well, rules have to be followed, don't they? I don't recall that guy ever taking a vow in our ancestral shrine."

"Exactly. Without taking a vow in the ancestral shrine and finishing the ritual, a man can't be counted as a son-in-law who is qualified to take our surname."

"Clanmaster, you can't be so eager to take a man you harbor deep hatred with as your son-in-law, just to qualify Nie Tian's attendance to the lot-drawing. You have to remember that Nie Jin's death was all because of him!"

"Even though you are the clanmaster, you can't disregard the family rules and act recklessly, right?"

"... "

Inside the hall, both immediate members and extended members of the Nie clan who had brought their children started yelling in dissatisfaction and accusing Nie Donghai of acting recklessly.

Every additional child participating in the lot-drawing would mean a reduction of their own child's opportunities, so naturally, people weren't happy about that.

If it were before Nie Donghai had been seriously wounded, he would have more authority, and people wouldn't dare to act this way.

However, they knew about Nie Donghai's condition and the fact that he might have to hand over his position as clanmaster soon due to his degrading cultivation level, so they no longer felt the need to give him face.

Nie Beichuan sat straight in his chair and listened to the noisy crowd with no intention to break the tumult.

As the yelling grew louder and louder, Liu Yan from the Cloudsoaring sect coughed softly.

All of a sudden, everyone shut their mouths.

Even Nie Nanshan, who was about to question Nie Donghai one more time, stopped immediately and turned to Liu Yan with a smiling face.

Liu Yan, his face smooth and jade-like, had a slight change in his expression as he looked towards Nie Tian, who stood next to Nie Qian. "This is... the son of my junior martial sister?"

While he talked, a twinge of subtle pain flashed in his eyes.

His words suddenly reminded everyone that Nie Jin had the most amazing talent among the second generation of the Nie clan. She managed to reach the ninth level of Qi Refining at the age of ten, and thus was acknowledged by the Cloudsoaring sect and became one of their disciples.

Liu Yan was her eldest martial brother.

"Sir, Nie Tian is my poor sister's only son," Nie Qian said sadly.

Liu Yan gently nodded as he looked at Nie Tian with a complex and profound expression, before he warmly said, "This time, I'd

originally planned to provide five small toys. However, my junior martial sister and I go way back, so for Nie Tian, I will take the initiative and add two spiritual tools from my own collection. How does this sound?"

He turned around to look at Nie Beichuan and Nie Nanshan.

"Since Mr. Liu has said so, of course we will agree," Nie Beichuan replied in a hurry.

Nie Nanshan also nodded at once with a smiling face while saying, "Whatever Mr. Liu says."

None of the rest of the crowd dared to object.

"With that settled, the lot-drawing convention will now begin." Liu Yan cut to the chase. He waved his left hand, sending seven streaks of mysterious light flying out of his sleeve.

The seven streaks of light, each a different color, lit up the Nie clan's great hall, illuminating everything around them.

The lights fell on the stone floor in center of the great hall and turned into seven tools glistening with spiritual light, namely, a sword, a saber, a fan, a glove, a wooden staff, a bead, and a piece of animal bone.

Every member of the Nie clan, whether young or old, voluntarily cleared out of the center of the great hall as soon as they saw the

seven spiritual tools landing on the ground. Immediately after that, they gathered around the tools.

Everyone's gaze was immediately fixed on the seven exquisite spiritual tools, and none of them bothered to give Nie Tian another glance.

Nie Donghai and his two brothers stood up subconsciously and emanated spiritual fluctuations to sense the attributes and ranks of the seven spiritual tools.

Many members of the Nie clan, eyes shining with eagerness, also tried to use their inner spiritual energy to judge the spiritual tools.

Cyan, purple, red, and blue colored spiritual energy emerged from the seven spiritual tools under the power sensing of the Qi warriors of the Nie clan.

"Elementary grade five!"

Nie Lan's wide-open eyes were fixed on the cyan bead that Liu Yan had brought out last, as his breathing grew slightly rapid.

"Oh, heavens. Is it really of grade five?"

"Aren't all the spiritual tools supposed to be of Elementary grade three according to the traditions? A spiritual tool of the fifth grade, even at Elementary level, is still of great value. It is usually something awarded to their own disciples, but this time..."

"How generous of Mr. Liu!"

The cyan bead seemed to have strands of lightning flickering inside it under the influence of everyone's spiritual energy, which made it especially rare. Therefore, everyone's eyes turned red and glittered with greed.

Nie Beichuan fixedly stared at the bead as a strange light flashed in his eyes.

Nie Lan was his son, which meant Nie Hong was his grandson. Long before Nie Hong was born, he used secret magics to test Nie Hong's talent.

Due to the low level of his cultivation base, he relied on the help of an extraordinary medicinal pill to be seventy percent sure that Nie Hong had the inner attribute of lightning.

That Elementary grade five cyan bead was clearly lightning-attributed, making it a spiritual tool completely compatible with Nie Hong's cultivation.

Nie Beichuan's attitude changed slightly as he faced Liu Yan. He bowed gratefully and said, "Thank you so much for your generosity, Mr. Liu Yan."

The rest of the crowd followed Nie Beichuan's lead and expressed their gratitude to Liu Yan for being so generous.

Liu Yan waved his hands to quiet down the crowd and said, "From now on, no one shall use their spiritual energy to sense the spiritual tools; that could disturb the aura of the tools. As of now, it's completely up to these eight children to determine their own destinies."

"Let the eight children in!" Nie Donghai said in a low voice.

"Go ahead!" Nie Qian felt a bit of relief and let go of Nie Tian.

The moment those seven spiritual tools landed on the ground, Nie Tian's eyes shined with eagerness and impatience, as he wanted to rush into the central area immediately. Were it not for Nie Qian, who had been tightly clasping his arms, he probably wouldn't have waited for everyone to finish talking before he rushed into the central area.

When she let go, Nie Tian, as she expected, opened his arms in a manner as if to embrace the whole world, and rushed into the central area.

# Chapter 3: The Vilest Event In The History Of Nie Clan!

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BANG!

A kid who was in Nie Tian's way got knocked off his feet from the powerful impact he received from Nie Tian.

That kid was Nie Nanshan's grandson, Nie Yuan. The moment he fell to the ground, he immediately burst into a fit of tears.

Nie Tian didn't look at Nie Yuan, or even circle around him; instead he directly stepped over Nie Yuan.

Moreover, Nie Tian's right foot landed on Nie Yuan's hand as he rushed forward, making Nie Yuan cry even more heavily.

Nie Nanshan strove to calm himself, and Nie Yuan's father, Nie Qiu, could almost feel his son's pain. The faces of both men immediately turned sullen.

Considering that it was quite common for kids to run into each other during the lot-drawing, Nie Nanshan and Nie Qiu suppressed their anger for the moment.

"Nie Tian, be careful!" Nie Qian shouted anxiously.

However, it seemed Nie Tian didn't hear Nie Qian's call as he



stepped over Nie Yuan and ran toward the spiritual tool closest to him.

At this time, another child of the Nie clan, with glittering small eyes, stared at the glove, which was emitting misty red light. When he reached out his hand towards the glove, his fingertips also emitted rays of red light.

Obviously, the child's cultivation attribute completely matched the spiritual energy contained in the glove.

A extended member of the Nie clan got emotional and worked up, crying out, "That's destined for Liang'er!"

At first sight, Liu Yan and the whole Nie clan could tell without a doubt that the glove, glowing red light and all, was the tool Nie Liang needed.

Liu Yan nodded softly and said to himself, "Fire attribute..."

Everyone saw that Nie Liang's unsteady small hand was on the verge of touching the glove.

However at that moment, Nie Tian came running over and knocked Nie Liang to the ground before he reached out to grab the glove.

Before the confused Nie Liang could make a sound, Nie Tian already grasped the glove in his hand and burst into a loud

laughter.

As Nie Tian was laughing with his mouth wide open, Nie Liang realized what had happened and started to cry out loud, "Wah, wah! Mine, mine..."

Nie Tian's face was filled with satisfaction and pleasant laughter, while in contrast, Nie Liang was scared and in tears.

"Bastard!" growled Nie Liang's father, an expert from an extended branch of the Nie clan. "That glove doesn't agree with Nie Tian's cultivation attribute. There wasn't even a smidgen of energy fluctuation from Nie Tian's body that agreed with the spiritual tool, so why should he get it?"

Liu Yan of the Cloudsoaring sect smiled as he watched Nie Tian reach out to take the glove.

Liu Yan had to hold back from laughing. Right when he was going to say a few words in consolation, he discovered that Nie Tian, after enjoying forcibly taking the glove, had rushed to another nearby spiritual tool.

While Nie Liang was still crying, Nie Tian donned the red glove and dashed toward the blue sword.

Meanwhile, another child of the Nie clan was holding the blue sword, his tiny face filled with smile.

While he held the sword, waves of blue light immediately emerged from both the sword and the child's flesh that came into contact with the sword.

As he grinned joyously and prepared to laugh out loud, Nie Tian swooped in like the wind.

Relying on his superior strength, Nie Tian snatched the blue sword out of the other child's grip, laughing the whole time.

The child who just lost his spiritual tool stood in confusion for a moment before he tried to recapture the sword from Nie Tian's hand, but he ended up being pushed to the ground.

"Wah, wah!"

Another child's ear-piercing cries rang through the Nie clan's great hall.

"How impudent! This little bastard is too impudent!" Fuming, another extended member of Nie clan could hardly hold back from immediately rushing into the court.

Nie Tian, who was apparently addicted to robbing, paid no attention to him and continued on his rampage in the court, totally disregarding the crowd. In a short period of time, Nie Tian managed to forcibly grab the remaining saber, fan, animal bone, wooden staff, bead.

Many members of the Nie clan present at the lot-drawing were struck wide-eyed and tongue-tied, looking at Nie Tian as if he was some kind of devil.

The cries of the seven children and cursing of their fathers went on and on, filling the great hall.

Nie Tian's two hands could barely hold the seven spiritual tools he had taken, so he put them in a pile as he squatted on the ground and played with them one by one, his face filled with a smile and his eyes filled with satisfaction.

However, everyone could clearly see that none of the tools showed any sign of energy fluctuations as he laid his chubby little hands on them.

That meant none of the spiritual tools he had taken from the other children agreed with his cultivation attribute.

He was basically breaking the rules simply because he felt like it!

The seven children who had their spiritual tools stolen from them were currently crying nonstop, and naturally gathered around Nie Tian, enviously and helplessly staring at the spiritual tools that matched their respective cultivation attributes and made them comfortable and relaxed. They even tried, in vain, to get them back.

"Mine, all mine...." Nie Tian turned around to face them as he

made threatening gestures while mumbling something.

Greedily looking at the cyan pearl, Nie Hong approached, step by step, hoping to cross Nie Tian and snatch the cyan pearl back.

POW!

Nie Tian swung his chubby fist and unceremoniously hit Nie Hong in the face. As a result, Nie Hong was thrown to the ground and started to cry louder than ever.

The other six children had nothing but fear on their faces after witnessing Nie Tian's demonic actions. Their helpless eyes were still fixed on the spiritual tools which should have been theirs, yet no one dared to go for them any more.

"How savage! I've been present for numerous lot-drawings, but I've never seen such a savage and presumptuous child!"

"The little hoodlum! None of the seven spiritual tools agreed with his cultivation attribute, yet he forcibly snatched all of them, not sparing even one. Our clan has never seen such a vile event!"

"Clan members should be brothers. We love and help each other. One must never take all the benefits! Now look at him. Not only does he want to eat the meat, but he won't even share a sip of soup with others. He simply defies all principles and doesn't follow any of the rules!"

Listening to the crying and cursing inside the hall, Nie Beichuan and Nie Nanshan's faces were as dark and gloomy as lake water.

Nie Qian, standing by the gate, looking at the laughing Nie Tian and became a little worried. She even secretly hated that he had been so reckless, offending the whole Nie clan.

She turned to Nie Donghai with a pitiful face, but was met with Nie Donghai's bitter smile.

Embarrassed and with his head aching, he didn't know how to handle this situation either.

"Well..."

Having watched the whole scene, Liu Yan spoke softly. The noise-filled hall resumed silence as he spoke.

The angry members of the Nie clan looked away from Nie Tian and refocused on Liu Yan.

Liu Yan gently coughed as he looked at the crowd, then he said, "Horseplay between kids... is amusing. As for the seven toys, in my opinion, Nie Tian shall not take all of them. How about this: we'll let Nie Tian keep one and the rest will go to the other children. Then we can call an end to this incident, what do you say?"

Seeing the tension being eased, Nie Donghai secretly exhaled, and said, "We will do as Mr. Liu says. Nie Tian, you shall behave and

choose just one from the tools! Return the rest to your brothers and don't ever act so rudely again!"

"What about you?" Liu Yan faced towards the rest of the Nie clan members.

Under his gaze, the previously shouting Nie clan members, who had demanded that Nie Tian be punished, had no choice but to nod, agreeing to his arrangement.

"Good." Liu Yan smiled and gently nodded his head before he looked Nie Tian deep in the eye while tenderly saying, "Okay, listen to Uncle Liu's words. You can take any spiritual tool you like, but give the rest back to your younger and older brothers."

Nie Tian pouted unwillingly, and even glanced stealthily at Nie Qian.

Nie Qian gave him a hard look and said, "If you dare to act unruly, watch what I'm going to do with you!"

Nie Tian cringed, as if he feared no one but Nie Qian. Without even looking down, he casually reached his hand to the pile of spiritual tools and pulled out the piece of animal bone, then left immediately.

His indifferent attitude made everyone well aware that he seemed to have little interest in these seven spiritual tools from the start.

What he enjoyed seemed to be... merely the process of taking them from others.

Watching him taking the lowest ranked animal bone, many of the Nie clan members' faces brightened with surprise. As they secretly mocked his stupidity, the gloomy looks on their faces faded slightly.

The moment he got out of the way, the rest of the Nie clan kids, unable to contain their excitement any longer, rushed forward to seize the spiritual tools they had their eyes on long ago.

"Wahh!"

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## Chapter 4: Liu Yan's Confusion

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Afternoon.

Nie Qian berated Nie Tian as he ate and drank his fill, but then he fell asleep, so she finally stopped.

Nie Tian had been holding that animal bone in his hand ever since he got back from the lot-drawing, and yet Nie Qian couldn't find any spiritual energy connections between Nie Tian and the bone.

"What a dummy..." Nie Qian murmured. "He had so many high ranked spiritual tools to choose from, yet he picked this thing...."

Suddenly, Nie Donghai's voice came from outside. "Whatever... Even if he obtained the highest ranked bead, it would also be useless to him. None of the seven spiritual tools were suitable for him. I should have known from the start that having him participate in the lot-drawing wouldn't be productive."

As Nie Qian turned around to look, she found that Nie Donghai and Liu Yan of the Cloudsoaring sect had come together. "Father. Mr. Liu."

Nie Donghai glanced lovingly at Nie Tian, who was sound asleep, lying on his back with his limbs widely spread. Then he sighed softly, frowned, and said, "A while ago, I secretly tested him in hope of determining the attribute of his inner spiritual energy. However..."

After a pause, he continued, "Perhaps due to my insufficient cultivation base, I failed to sense any fluctuation of spiritual energy in him. I knew by then that even if he did participate in the lot-drawing he would most likely not gain much.

"That was the reason I didn't push so hard to get him into the lot-drawing convention."

Nie Qian was both shocked and confused. "But father, after I begged you for this opportunity, you did help after all... "

Nie Donghai forced a smile. "Deep down, I was still unwilling to give up. I wished for a miracle to happen. From the look of it, I've put in too much hope into the matter."

"It was my fault." Nie Qian blamed herself.

By then, she realized Nie Donghai loved Nie Tian just as much as she did and he would even get in a conflict with everyone in the Nie clan again, just to fight for a shred of opportunity for Nie Tian.

Even though he knew all his efforts could have been in vain, he did it anyway.

"Let me take a closer look." While he talked, Liu Yan walked to window and stretched out his hand over the sleeping Nie Tian.

White aura swirled out of Liu Yan's left palm. Its misty and bright apperaranace made his hand white like jade.

Liu Yan gently placed his hand onto Nie Tian's lower abdomen as he narrowed his eyes in concentration. Shreds of spiritual energy as thin as hair emerged from his hand and entered Nie Tian's lower abdomen, gradually seeping into his limbs and bones.

Nie Tian seemed to be comfortable in his sleep, as a smile had emerged on his chubby little face. He even snored a bit, as if he was having a sweet dream.

The warm, jade-like light gradually covered the surface of Nie Tian's body, as if he were a porcelain doll in the light of a lantern.

However, Nie Donghai and Nie Qian gazed at Nie Tian with worried looks.

They were fully aware that the jade-like gloss came solely from Liu Yan's spiritual energy.

The spiritual energy triggered no change after roaming around in Nie Tian's body, which meant Nie Tian's body didn't contain any spiritual energy waves.

Quite a while later, Liu Yan gently retrieved his hand before turning to Nie Donghai and shaking his head.

Nie Donghai and Nie Qian looked on, aghast.

Liu Yan was also confused. "It shouldn't be like this. I'm familiar with junior martial sister's natural talent. Forget Black Cloud City as a whole, even in the Cloudsoaring sect her talent was among the best. Even married to a completely talentless mortal, her child should have inherited part of her talent. It shouldn't be this way.

"I did a thorough search in Nie Tian's body, but I really felt no trace of spiritual energy fluctuations."

"Huh... " Nie Donghai let out a deep sigh and looked frustrated.

Liu Yan frowned and said, "However, Nie Tian's Qi and blood is extremely vigorous. I could see at the lot-drawing that he was much stronger and more powerful than his peers. His muscles and bones are tough and resilient. If it were a contest of pure strength and force with no spiritual energy involved, probably no one in his generation of the Nie clan could compete with him."

"How is that useful?" Nie Qian said bitterly, "Those children are still young. When they grow older and begin to understand the words of adults, they will start to cultivate spiritual energy. Spiritual power is the key to measure the strength of a Qi warrior. It is also the source of real strength. How far can he go solely relying on his physical strength?"

"This is also what I worry about the most." Nie Donghai added, "Those children who have special spiritual energy attributes in their bodies can practice spiritual methods compatible with their inner attributes. One by one, they will progress rapidly,

establishing their foundation early on. Only those children would have the hope of reaching the ninth level of Qi Refining at the age of fifteen, therefore earning the favor of the Cloudsoaring sect."

"Because Nie Tian has not clearly shown his cultivation attribute, he may have to go tread a slower cultivation path. That means he almost has no hope of reaching the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of fifteen, and accordingly, the door to Cloudsoaring sect would close for him permanently. Not being able to enter the Cloudsoaring sect, he would be stuck in the Nie clan his whole life."

Liu Yan came to Nie Donghai's side, patted him on the shoulder, and said sincerely, "It's not necessarily a bad thing for him not to enter the Cloudsoaring sect. Among the Cloudsoaring sect's young and talented, many died premature deaths. On the way to seeking the peak, every step could be deadly. To be able to cross those tribulations unharmed, one must have an impressive fate."

"To live a life safely and peacefully like Nie Tian can also be a blessing."

Liu Yan's words reminded Nie Donghai of his late daughter Nie Jin, before he felt a pain in his heart and was completely at a loss for words.

"Since matters here have been sorted out, I will now return to the Cloudsoaring sect. Back when junior martial sister was practicing cultivation in the sect, I acted as her mentor, so I was extremely fond of junior martial sister and placed great importance on her. Brother, you may rest assured. I'll make every effort to find the

one who killed her. Whenever there is news, I will let you know."

Liu Yan gently patted on Nie Donghai's shoulder before strolling out of the room.

"Mr. Liu, thank you so much for everything," Nie Donghai said gratefully.

Nie Qian echoed Nie Donghai's words and quickly said, "Thank you, Mr. Liu."

They intended to see Liu Yan out, but by the time they got to the door, Liu Yan's pace had increased to such a level that he was already disappearing off into the distance.

"Mr. Liu has been so kind to us," Nie Donghai muttered with a frown, "If it were not for him, the clan members... probably wouldn't have let Nie Tian off so easily."

"After Little Tian and I left, did those guys...?" Nie Qian said with hatred.

Nie Donghai nodded in assent. "Of course they made a scene. Every one of them dwelt on the fact that Nie Tian wasn't a true grandson of the Nie clan, and also that he made a mess at the lot-drawing convention. They insisted on punishing him. Fortunately, Mr. Liu helped and spoke up, so they didn't dare to question me further, otherwise I wouldn't have been able to protect him.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Liu has left and won't return frequently in the future." Nie Qian sighed.

"As long as I'm still head of the Nie clan, I won't tolerate their impudence!" Nie Donghai said with a cold harrumph.

"I fear... I fear that you can't keep that position for long, father." Nie Qian smiled bitterly.

"I'll keep it until the day I can't. I must seek justice for you and Jin'er!" Nie Donghai's face was firm and determined. After speaking these words, he also stepped out of the room.

Watching his formerly-heroic figure disappearing into distance, Nie Qian sat in front of the door with a desolate face, and her mind drifted away.

Inside, Nie Tian was still deep asleep, but the threads of spiritual energy Liu Yan left on his body during his analysis lingered.

Because of the flowing spiritual energy, Nie Tian's flesh and skin began to ripple slightly. It almost looked like tiny waves flowing across water.

Every time his flesh and skin gently trembled, the spiritual energy would become somewhat dimmer, as if his flesh and blood was greedily absorbing and refining the spiritual energy.

Neither Liu Yan, Nie Donghai, nor Nie Qian knew anything about

this.

Usually, Nie Tian would only nap for an hour at noon.

But today, he slept for four hours, which was very surprising. When it reached the point that there wasn't a single shred of spiritual power left on his body, he finally stretched his limbs in comfort and woke up.

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# Chapter 5: Undefeated Record

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Time ran like a river. Nine years passed in a flash.

Early in the morning, as the sun was just beginning to rise above the horizon, numerous junior members of the Nie clan gathered in a public square. Some were sitting cross-legged, inhaling and exhaling the faint spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth, while others were working on their fighting techniques, exchanging blows that sent blasts of air out in all directions.

In a corner of the spacious square, a bunch of 10-year-old children of the Nie clan were hatefully looking down the stone road to their east, with their fists clenched.

"He's only at the third level of Qi Refining. I don't believe that he can win every time! Having made another breakthrough yesterday, I'm going to teach him an extremely memorable lesson today!" After nine years, the ten year old Nie Hong, by virtue of the bead that he had obtained in the lot-drawing nine years ago, had already successfully cultivated to the sixth level of Qi Refining. The fingertips of his left hand flickered with a hint of an electric aura as he ground his teeth in anger.

"Brother Hong," Nie Yuan said, "knowing about your recent breakthrough, he shouldn't dare to show up today, right?"

Nie Hong shook his head. "No, he'll come for sure. I know him!"

A guest elder of the Nie clan, Wu Tao, was leading a group of

young boys and girls from the Nie clan in cultivation. Most of the youngsters were around fourteen or fifteen, and every member of the group would occasionally cast curious glances in the direction of the part of the square where Nie Tian was expected to appear.

Suddenly, from the long, narrow stone path leading to the east, the sonorous voice of a young man could be heard. "Nie Yuan, were you the one who said I wouldn't dare to come just now?"

Nie Tian appeared, who was by now significantly taller than his peers.

"Here he comes!"

"Knowing the fact that Nie Hong has reached the sixth level of Qi Refining, he still dares to come... He's got some balls!"

"Interesting!"

Upon hearing the familiar voice, other boys and girls of the Nie clan who were slightly older became cheerful and excited.

Those who were cultivating gradually stood up. Those who were practicing their fancy physical combat moves suddenly stopped. One after the other, they all turned to stare at Nie Tian.

In their eyes Nie Tian was different.

Nine years has passed since that lot-drawing convention, yet Nie Tian hadn't shown any special cultivation attribute. The animal bone he had won failed to resonate with his spiritual energy.

On the contrary, Nie Hong, Nie Yuan, and the others, having determined the attributes of their spiritual power, started to cultivate specific spiritual incantations. With the help of the spiritual tools they had obtained from the lot-drawing convention, their cultivating speed had progressed swiftly and violently. Meanwhile, Nie Tian... was still cultivating using the most basic Qi Refining Incantation.

Nie Tian's slow cultivation advancement made him a target of secret ridicule among people. Neither the clanmaster Nie Donghai nor Nie Qian could do anything to help.

However, to everyone's surprise, Nie Tian's body grew stronger and stronger, which allowed him to fight children of a similar age without being at a disadvantage because of his low Qi Refining level.

On the contrary, in the past nine years, every peer who had fought Nie Tian ended up losing.

Up to this day, Nie Tian had maintained an undefeated record.

The reason why they paid close attention to Nie Tian's battles was that they wanted to know when his advantage of tremendous physical strength would disappear.

Nie Hong, who had advanced to the sixth level of Qi Refining yesterday, carried a mighty lightning force in his inner spiritual power. Everyone was confident that Nie Tian's undefeated record would end in today's battle.

Therefore, they secretly looked forward to this fight.

Nie Tian walked up to them, and as he took a side glance at Nie Yuan, he challenged, "Nie Yuan, it was you who previously taunted me, right? How about the two of us give it a go right now?"

Nie Yuan's cultivation had reached the fifth level of Qi Refining, yet facing Nie Tian's glare, he suddenly seemed somewhat timid.

He took half a step back subconsciously. Threatening in manner but cowardly at heart, he said, "Nie Tian, your opponent for today is brother Hong. If you can still stand after your battle with brother Hong, then I'll fight you myself."

"Shameless," whispered Nie You, a girl with with her hair wrapped up in a braid on top of her head.

"Fine, whatever..." Nie Tian said with total indifference and disdain. "To fight you, I don't even need to bring out my best."

"You!" Nie Yuan's face was filled with anger.

"Get out of the way, all of you!" Nie Hong shouted out loud, signaling the other children to move further away. Meanwhile, his

right fist was already covered in threads of cyan lightning.

Upon hearing Nie Hong's words, all the children around him stepped back, making room for him and Nie Tian.

In center of the square, Wu Tao, along with the Nie clan's older teenagers, could see that the fighting was about to start. All of them began to converge on that particular corner, laughing and chatting about the matter.

Nie Donghai was standing on the balcony of a high stone palace, with both of his hands on the stone wall, as he looked down at the square.

During the past nine years, Nie Donghai took advantage of the power he had as head of the Nie clan and tried every possible way to gather information about the man who got Nie Jin killed.

Unfortunately, so far, he had not received a single word regarding that man's whereabouts.

It was as if the man had shown up out of nowhere and then disappeared into thin air.

The only thing he had left was Nie Tian, who was about to fight Nie Hong in this very square.

On the other hand, Nie Donghai's physical condition had been deteriorating by the day. His once tall and mighty body had now

turned into a bag of bones. Even the least observant person could tell with a single glance that his time was running out.

Watching Nie Tian winning battles against his peers again and again from the high balcony became one of his few joys.

But he also understood that, because Nie Tian had a poor cultivation base and could rely only on physical strength, he would eventually be defeated someday.

He also knew that once Nie Tian was defeated, it would mark the end of his physical strength being his advantage.

From then on, the gap between Nie Tian and his peers would grow bigger and bigger, as those children's cultivation base would improve much more rapidly.

"Will it be today?..." Nie Donghai muttered to himself.

BZZZ! BZZZ!

A strange sound emanated out from Nie Hong's fist, which was flashing with an electric aura. Then Nie Hong let out a loud shout, before suddenly rushing towards Nie Tian.

"Well, he is indeed a bit faster and fiercer than before." Nie Tian smiled at Nie Hong, who was swooping at him with all his power. However, Nie Tian didn't have the slightest intention to dodge.

He suddenly lifted his hand and took a bold step forward, before he ruthlessly met Nie Hong's right fist with his significantly larger fist.

BANG!

The clash of the two fists made a muffled sound, before Nie Hong's surging momentum suddenly came to a stop.

Nie Tian took two steps back, shaking his fist and grimacing in pain. As he swung his arm, a trace of the electric aura sputtered away from his fist.

The crowd took a close look on the back of Nie Tian's hand and saw distinct black burns.

"While the sixth level of Qi Refining is only one level higher than the fifth level, there is an essential difference. The sixth level allows spiritual power to be released outside of the body, and the lightning power contained in his spiritual power is able to penetrate the opponent's body." Nie Xian, a fourteen year old from a branch of the Nie clan who already cultivated to the eighth level of Qi Refining, looked at Nie Tian deeply before he shook his head and continued, "With each collision of their two fists, Nie Hong will leave lightning damage by releasing his spiritual power into Nie Tian's body. Lightning will paralyze his muscles, making his whole body sore and numb, therefore he will have to spare some of his energy to resist the erosion caused by the residual lightning in his body."

"If this goes on, it won't be long before he loses his fighting capacity and falls prey to Nie Hong's humiliation.

"Fighting someone in the sixth level of Qi Refining head-on, while only being in the third level, is definitely not a wise move."

The Nie clan's guest elder, Wu Tao, briefly nodded before he took a side glance at Nie Xian with a look of admiration and said, "Nie Tian has been relying on his physical strength to fight over the years. Now he is used to fighting head-on since he hasn't suffered a loss doing so. But he doesn't know that being in the sixth level of Qi Refining, one can release their spiritual power out of their body. Not knowing that, he is bound to suffer greatly today. His unbeaten record... is probably going to end with this battle."

"Put bluntly, it is all because of his poor talent," Nie Xian said. "If he also had a unique attribute in his spiritual power like Nie Hong does, he would be able to defeat Nie Hong effortlessly."

"Did you feel it?" Lightning once again flashed around Nie Hong's fists as he coldly stared at Nie Tian's waving arms. "That little bit lightning power I left on your fist has already spread to your arms, hasn't it? How does it feel? That arm of yours has become sore and numb, hasn't it?"

"A tad." Nie Tian grinned, though he was obviously in pain, "But I'm okay. It's not really affecting me."

"Still want to play tough?" Nie Hong looked very excited, after



being defeated consecutively for nine years, he finally saw a sliver of hope in this battle, "Not affecting you, huh? Take a few more then!"

BANG BANG! BANG BANG BANG!

Nie Hong's fists came like cannon shots. To everyone's surprise, Nie Tian didn't dodge; he allowed them to slam into him endlessly, and just like before, he kept fighting back head-on.

After ten rounds, Nie Hong stopped, breathing heavily, as he looked at Nie Tian in a ferocious manner.

Both of Nie Tian's hands were as black as charred coals, with little lightning sparks constantly flying out of his arms.

Everyone could tell that his arms had become rather stiff as he waved them.

However Nie Tian's eyes showed an unprecedented high-spirited will to fight. Like a young ferocious beast who had finally awakened, he roared towards Nie Hong, "Keep them coming! Why did you stop? Come on, don't stop!"

It seemed as if he was the one who had the upper hand.

## Chapter 6: An Unknown Force

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"You're not scared of dying, huh?" Nie Hong said.

Wu Tao shook his head slightly and thought, "With his cultivation three levels higher... Nie Hong's inferior physical strength has already been completely neutralized. His overflowing spiritual power has left lightning waves that have been unceasingly battering Nie Tian's flesh. There's no need to continue this battle, otherwise... "

Nie Xian frowned and said, "If this continues, Nie Tian will probably end up severely injured or even handicapped for the rest of his life. Even though we encourage battles within the clan, they are only allowed on the condition of not being too excessive. Mr. Wu, do you... do you think we should put a stop to their fight?"

"Yes," replied Wu Tao. "If they insist on fighting, I'm afraid Nie Tian will get terribly hurt." Just as he was about to continue speaking, he felt someone in the distance lay eyes on him.

Subconsciously, he traced the source of that look.

Nie Hong's grandfather, Nie Beichuan, had appeared in the south-west corner of the square without being noticed by anyone.

He stood there with his hands folded behind his back, gazing at Wu Tao with a profound expression, as if he knew he was going to try to stop the fight.

Wu Tao's expression flickered. His opened mouth didn't make a sound; instead he sighed inwardly.

He was the Nie clan's guest elder who had been, by chance, recruited by Nie Beichuan. He clearly understood that Nie Donghai's time was limited and that Nie Beichuan would replace him in the near future.

He knew that if he still wished to continue working for the Nie clan, he had to understand the situation and do the smart thing.

Nie Xian quickly followed his gaze and saw Nie Beichuan standing not too far away.

"Mr. Wu?" he said softly.

"There are certain matters that... neither you nor I can do anything about." Wu Tao gently patted Nie Xian's shoulder. "Build up yourself. I hope you can break through to the ninth level of Qi Refining as soon as possible and gain the Cloudsoaring sect's favor. At the end of the day, you're merely a descendant from a branch of the Nie clan. Only when you become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect will you have a say in the Nie clan."

A look of disgust could be seen on Nie Xian's youthful and immature face, but he nodded and refrained from saying anything further.

On the high platform in the stone temple, Nie Donghai's face suddenly turned very grim as he noticed second brother Nie Beichuan, and quickly realized why Wu Tao didn't stop the fight, as subtle as it was.

"Just because I haven't given up my position?" Nie Donghai said to himself, hatred seething inside.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Seeing the silver lining of victory, Nie Hong's spirits soared. Once again he attacked Nie Tian, and glittering cyan lightning continued to pass from his fist into Nie Tian's body.

Nie Tian's hands both turned as black as iron, and plumes of black smoke even emanated out from between his fingers.

His sleeves were blasted into pieces and threads of lightning that resembled tiny cyan snakes danced around his naked arms.

More and more threads of lightning infiltrated his body, where they gathered together and built up into cords.

THUMP THUMP!

Nie Tian couldn't help but step back. Under Nie Hong's ferocious attack, every time he raised his hands to defend, his movements turned even stiffer and more powerless.

He totally forgot about the pain in his arms, even though his forehead was covered in sweat. His eyes were like a bright, shining star in the night sky, brimming with deep mysteries.

"You're finished! Haha!" Nie Hong laughed excitedly as his lightning-wreathed fists penetrated Nie Tian's sluggish defense, ruthlessly bearing down on his chest.

"No!" Wu Tao shouted subconsciously.

Nie Xian also couldn't help but cry out, "Nie Hong, stop!"

On the high platform, Nie Donghai's face was covered in sweat, panting nonstop, as if he was even more exhausted than Nie Tian.

His eyes were cold like lake water as he glared at the calm and composed Nie Beichuan, hoping to hear him call off this fight.

Yet Nie Beichuan didn't say a word.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

Nie Tian's heartbeat grew faster and stronger. As he saw Nie Hong's fist rapidly approaching his chest, he felt that there was some sort of power in his body, just on the verge of bursting out.

However, when he wanted to draw support from that power, he

couldn't locate it.

All he could feel was pain and numbness all over his body. Suddenly, anger and despair took over as he realized that the power was refusing to cooperate.

THUMP THUMP! THUMP THUMP!

Overwhelmed by outrage and desperation, his heartbeat once again sped up!

He didn't realize it, but his heart had begun racing twice as fast as usual in between those blasts of lightning!

Just at that moment, it seemed as if a cheering voice rushed out from his flesh and organs! As of then, he was no longer affected in the least by the residual lightning left inside of him.

All of a sudden, a barbaric strength exploded out madly from within his flesh!

WHOOSH!

Before Nie Hong's deadly fist could smash into his ribcage, he swiftly reached out his hands and grabbed Nie Hong's wrist with great precision.

Nie Hong's hand stopped only half an inch away from Nie Tian's

torso and couldn't move forward at all!

With his fist being stopped abruptly, Nie Hong's excited face was immediately taken over by confusion, as if he couldn't comprehend what just happened.

In the next moment, Nie Tian lifted his leg and kicked Nie Hong hard in the abdomen.

BANG!

Nie Hong's hand was still being held tightly, making it impossible for him to escape. Under the impact of Nie Tian's powerful kick, Nie Hong's lower body was thrown into the air like a swing.

As Nie Hong's flying lower body swung back down due to gravity, Nie Tian retracted one of his feet before he forcefully smashed Nie Hong's lower ribcage with his knee.

KAH CHA! OWWW!

A bone-cracking sound was heard, along with Nie Hong screaming like a pig being slaughtered.

Only then did Nie Tian release his grip on Nie Hong's wrist. He froze, and a strange look appeared on his face as he tried to calm himself and search for the source of that sudden and wild strength.

However, with the crisis being relieved and his inner world becoming calm again, his pounding heart also quickly returned to normal.

That surging force seemed to have instantly dissipated into his limbs and flesh, and could no longer be sensed.

"Strange..."

Nie Tian didn't even glance at Nie Hong. Knitting his brows, he seemed completely absorbed in his own world.

Nie Hong was curled up on the ground, spasming like a human-sized prawn and letting out ear-piercing cries that hurt everybody's eardrums.

"Uh..." Nie Xian's face was full of astonishment.

"How can it be?" Wu Tao, startled and confused, stared at both Nie Tian, who was deep in thought, and Nie Hong, who was unceasingly screaming in pain.

Every Nie clan youngster who witnessed the fight was overwhelmed by the sudden reversal of the situation, and had had no idea what to do.

Nie Yuan, who had clamored to teach Nie Tian a lesson after Nie Hong, was now looking at the incomparably miserable Nie Hong. His eyes quickly filled with fear, and he began to cower back



quietly.

Even though Nie Tian's fists were pitch black, with dark smoke rising from the gaps between his fingers, he stood there unwavering like a mountain. In distinct contrast, Nie Hong was lying on the ground, filling the air with loud cries.

At this moment, it seemed Nie Tian had left a permanent scar in the depths of Nie Hong's heart.

On the high platform of the stone temple, Nie Donghai almost collapsed after experiencing such a huge reversal. His skinny body was barely managing to stand as he leaned against the stone railings.

His eyes, bright like the last rays of the setting sun, stared at Nie Tian and glowed with a special light.

# Chapter 7: The Price Of Victory

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"How impudent!"

Seeing his grandson getting severely wounded and falling to the ground, Nie Beichuan couldn't help bolting towards them.

Like a flash of lightning, he rushed over and crouched down next to Nie Hong, then propped him up with his large hands. Next, he pressed his hand against Nie Hong's sternum.

Nie Hong felt a warm flow of spiritual energy swirling near his sternum, relieving much of his pain. Voice filled with grief, he said, "Grandfather..."

Nie Beichuan lifted his head and coldly eyed Nie Tian, who was still standing in confusion and trying to sense that unknown power within him.

"Bastard!" Nie Beichuan said. "We don't ban battles between clan members, but who allowed you to make such vicious strikes?"

Before Nie Tian could respond, Nie Beichuan threw a malicious glare at Wu Tao, who seemed completely embarrassed.

"And what about you?" yelled Nie Beichuan. "As our guest elder, what are you doing here?! You clearly saw Nie Tian striking to kill. Why didn't you stop him immediately? Did we recruit you to do nothing?"

"Well..." Wu Tao smiled bitterly.

Nie Xian couldn't bear to simply look on, and tried to defend Wu Tao. "Second grandfather, it was Nie Hong who struck first. It wasn't Mr. Wu's fault."

He witnessed the whole thing, down to the smallest detail. When Nie Hong was going to smash against Nie Tian's heart, Wu Tao looked at Nie Beichuan to find out his opinion, but at that time Nie Beichuan hadn't said a word and clearly wasn't going to stop the fight.

Later, when Nie Tian suddenly exploded, as if he had obtained a godly power, everything happened so fast that Wu Tao simply didn't have enough time to stop it.

After all, Nie Xian was young. Even though he knew defending Wu Tao would result badly, he couldn't talk himself out of it.

"Who said you were allowed to speak?" Nie Beichuan let out a cold harrumph, glaring at Nie Xian with rage-filled eyes. "Who do you think you are? You are nothing but the child of an extended clan branch. If you want to have the right to speak in the clan, wait until you break into the ninth level of Qi Refining and join the Cloudsoaring sect. Only then will you be allowed to speak to me!"

Hearing these words, Nie Xian's childish face flushed with a bit of anger.

However, he thought it over and refrained from talking back, because he knew that, just as Wu Tao had said, until he became a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect, he had almost no influence within the Nie clan..

That was especially so considering that Nie Beichuan would very likely take Nie Donghai's place and become the head of the Nie clan in a year or two.

Many innocent and right-minded youngsters of the Nie clan had been about to follow Nie Xian and speak the truth. Nie Xian was the most talented among them all and he had the most promising future. Seeing him getting deterred by Nie Beichuan to the point where he didn't dare to speak any further, they all kept their mouths shut with aggrieved faces.

Nie Tian finally awoke from his confusion. Suddenly understanding the current situation, he straightened his chest and shouted with a righteous tone, "Second grandfather, well... Nie Hong challenged me himself. He was the one who took the initiative to launch strikes at a vital spot, with no regard for clan rules."

Nie Hong gritted his teeth in fury as he glared at Nie Tian and argued, "Grandfather, I was just trying to scare him. It wasn't my intention to hurt him badly. I restrained my power and wanted to pull back before my fist reached his chest. I absolutely could never have expected him to take advantage of the opportunity to try to murder me just when I was about to hold back.

"Shameless!" That was what many of the Nie clan children shouted in their hearts, feeling deep disdain toward Nie Hong for twisting the truth.

They all saw with perfect clarity that Nie Hong launched the last attack with eyes full of excitement and ecstasy. Where, in the least bit, was his intention of stopping?

Nie Hong planned to wash off his terrible record against Nie Tian over the years by severely injuring him. Therefore he attacked with full force. How could he possibly give up midway?

"You know exactly what you intended to do!" Nie Tian shouted.

"Shut up!" Nie Beichuan called out in a deep voice and interrupted Nie Tian, before he threw a cold look at Wu Tao and said, "It doesn't matter what happened in the process. The result is Nie Tian, with total disregard of clan rules, maliciously wounded Nie Hong. Mr. Wu, you are a guest elder of the Nie clan. How should we punish Nie Tian according to clan rules?"

"He should be banished to the mine in the Cloudsoaring Mountain for three years." Wu Tao replied in a low voice, although his heart was filled helpless bitterness and his eyes full of apologies.

All the Nie clan youngsters, who were originally too afraid to make a sound, couldn't help but start yelling again upon hearing the punishment, even though many of them had never been overly fond of Nie Tian to begin with.

"Nie Tian is only ten years old!"

"Being exiled to the Cloudsoaring sect's mine at the age of ten means that he would waste the next three years. His cultivation has already been slow. Squandering three years could completely kill off his chance of being favored by the Cloudsoaring sect."

"Being banished to the mines at ten, for three years, Nie Tian is really finished."

"Yeah, there will be no hope of him reaching the ninth level of Qi Refining before the age of 15 and becoming a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect."

"It's not that simple. People die from time to time in that mine. Nie Tian is only ten. He might not even be able to live and get out of there in three years!"

"This is too harsh, isn't it?"

"... "

Nie Beichuan looked over at them calmly. "What are you all getting so excited about? What? Do you all want to spend three years in the mine like Nie Tian?"

The indignant youngsters all quieted down after hearing his

words, although their faces were full of silent outrage.

"I'll go!" Nie Tian shouted recklessly. "Three years it is then. No big deal!"

"Mr. Wu, punish him according to clan rules!" Nie Beichuan said indifferently.

At that moment, Nie Donghai finally arrived after rushing down from the high platform of the stone palace. "Second Brother, Nie Tian is still young and naive. Do we really need to do this?"

In the past, he would have been able to take a leap and drop to the square the moment he heard Nie Beichuan announcing the punishment.

But now he had to walk step by step and spend significant time and energy to arrive on the scene before the situation got out of hand.

"Clanmaster," Wu Tao respectfully said.

Seeing his arrival, many children secretly let out sighs of relief and started yelling.

"Eldest Grandfather."

"Eldest Grandfather, it's great that you are here. You have to take

the lead in delivering justice."

"Eldest Grandpa, we saw everything, and that wasn't the truth."

Nie Beichuan frowned. Looking very serious, he said, "Eldest brother, a state has its state laws, and a clan also needs clan rules. Even though Nie Tian is young and you are the clanmaster, clan rules should not be broken."

"I'm no longer the clanmaster," Nie Donghai said softly.

As soon as these words came out, everyone in the square was suddenly astonished.

Nie Beichuan also got confused, but there was obviously a hint of ecstasy in his eyes, and he said, "Eldest Brother! What do you mean?"

"I'm tired. I don't have the energy to manage the Nie clan any more. Even you know about my condition. Early on, I wanted to make use of the clan's power to seek justice for Qian'er and Jin'er, so I was reluctant to give up my position." Nie Donghai looked despondent. "But I've thought it through and I want to give up. In the future... the Nie clan will rely on you, Second Brother."

"Eldest Brother, how can you do this? You are of noble character and high prestige within the clan, I... " Nie Beichuan spoke the opposite of his heart's desire.



Nie Donghai waved his hand and interrupted him with a determined tone, "I've made up my mind. I will make an announcement to all the elders. I think they will understand."

"Well," Nie Beichuan said slowly, his voice full of affectation. "If Eldest Brother insists, I won't stand in the way. Please rest assured, Eldest Brother, that I will spare no effort to help Qian'er and Jin'er. I see them as my own children and I will find a way to seek justice for them."

Nie Donghai looked at him deeply and nodded his head, "Nie Tian is still young, I hope..."

"Forget it," Nie Beichuan said with a smile. "I have to give face to Eldest Brother. I will not continue to pursue this matter any further."

"Then it's settled." Nie Donghai, exhausted both physically and mentally, turned his head and told Nie Tian, "Come with me."

As he finished talking, he took the lead in leaving the square. As he walked away, he looked extremely bleak, like a hero past his prime.

Watching him walk away, Wu Tao and the Nie clan's youngsters knew in their hearts that the era of Nie Donghai had come to an end today.

Nie Tian didn't say a word. He simply followed Nie Donghai

silently, a grim expression spreading across his face.

Right before he disappeared from the square, he paused, turned around, and looked at the high-spirited Nie Beichuan, before secretly clenching his fists.

At the age of ten, his mind was already rather mature. He clearly understood that Nie Donghai voluntarily gave up his position to save him.

## Chapter 8: Outbreak Of A Strange Disease

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After leaving the square, they came to a pavilion in a garden. The moment Nie Donghai stopped, Nie Tian softly said, "I'm sorry, grandpa."

Nie Donghai turned around and softly patted Nie Tian's head. "It's okay," he said affectionately. "Grandpa is tired and it's time for me to have a rest."

"Grandpa," Nie Tian quietly muttered, "if I didn't mess up, you could have..."

"No." Nie Donghai knew what he was going to say. He shook his head and explained warmly, "Even if that didn't happen, I planned to step down anyways. All these years, I've been blinded by hatred and spent too much energy seeking revenge. Unfortunately, the Nie clan isn't a strong and powerful clan. Even though I have wielded all the clan's power, I still couldn't track down that bastard."

After a pause, Nie Donghai let out a deep sigh and added, "Even if I could find him, perhaps, I wouldn't be able to do anything. I know too well how the Yun clan treated your aunt, and yet the Yun clan is in Black Cloud City, so what can I do?"

"I'm old, and my health... is also getting worse. Rather than wasting energy on useless things, I would like to spend more time with you."

"Grandpa," Nie Tian said firmly, "I'll be more thoughtful in the future and I won't fight Nie Hong anymore. When I become stronger, I'll personally seek justice for auntie from the Yun clan!"

Nie Donghai smiled and nodded as he looked deeply at him for a moment. Then, his expression changed and asked, "Just now, you were clearly on the verge of losing. How did you suddenly obtain the strength to make Nie Hong suffer a big loss?"

"I also have no idea what exactly happened." Nie Tian was quite confused himself. "Just when I thought that I was finished, it seemed... as if a violent and powerful force emerged from my flesh and blood. When that force rushed out, the lightning energy Nie Hong left in my body was completely wiped clean. Thanks to that, I had the strength to launch a counterattack."

Nie Donghai excitedly pressed his hand onto Nie Tian's abdomen and cast his senses inside.

A faint scrap of spirit power roamed within Nie Tian's body like drifting silk. After examining every corner of his body, Nie Donghai couldn't find anything.

However to his surprise, as Nie Tian said, he found absolutely no trace of the lightning power left by Nie Hong.

"Strange..." He retracted his hand, confused, and asked, "Did you sense that force again after the fight?"

"I did try hard to sense it after battle, but I couldn't find any trace of it." Nie Tian thought for a moment and said, "But I'm certain that the force resides within me. It seems I'm unable to fully control it yet and it only comes out at the most dangerous moments."

Nie Donghai remained silent, his eyes full of thoughts. After a long time, he said, "Don't mention this to anyone else."

Nie Tian nodded obediently. "Sure."

"Everything's settled then. Go find your aunt. Remember, from tomorrow on, I will no longer be the head of Nie clan. After today... don't be too naughty. Next time you have a conflict with a child of our clan, do not strike too hard."

"I understand," Nie Tian said.

Afterwards, Nie Donghai went straight to the Nie clan's library and buried his head in books. He dug out numerous rare books about cultivation practices in hope of finding the reason why Nie Tian's body experienced that strange phenomenon.

Unfortunately, after going through more than a dozen books, he still wasn't able to find a clue.

That night, Nie Qian's maidservant Han Yue was in a complete panic as she rushed around looking for Nie Donghai. When she found him, she hurriedly explained that Nie Tian, for no apparent

reason, had come down with a high fever.

Nie Donghai immediately left the library and followed Han Yue to Nie Tian's room. As soon as he entered, he saw an anxious Nie Qian standing by Nie Tian's bed, holding a cloth bag of ice on Nie Tian's forehead to help him fight the fever.

Seeing Nie Donghai's arrival, Nie Qian immediately called out like a drowning person spotting a rescue boat, "Father! I don't know what's wrong! Little Tian started to burn up after dinner and his body temperature has been rising higher and higher. I'm worried to death! I don't know what I should do. "

"Don't panic. Let me see." Nie Donghai rushed forward and put his big, rough hand on Nie Tian's chest.

"So hot!" Nie Donghai couldn't help but exclaim as soon as he touched Nie Tian's skin. His face suddenly tightened and said, "Something's wrong. His body temperature is so abnormally high!"

"It's got to be Nie Hong!" exclaimed Nie Qian. "With his cultivation reaching the sixth level of Qi Refining, he was able to release spiritual power from his body, yet he shamelessly fought Little Tian! It must be the residual lightning he left in Little Tian's body that caused the fever. Yet, second uncle had the nerve to denounce Little Tian, which led to father giving up his high position as clanmaster. I'll go and get even with them!" Nie Qian wanted to pour her towering rage on Nie Beichuan.

"You're not going anywhere!" Nie Donghai shouted.

"Father!" Nie Qian yelled back. "They bullied Little Tian and took advantage of your condition, because they knew that you were wounded and your cultivation was degrading! All these years, they have been pushing you little by little. They didn't truly respect and treat you as the clanmaster so they acted unruly. Today, they even used a conflict between children to make you leave your position! This is outrageous! I can't simply swallow it!"

"Curing Little Tian's fever is our most important task at the moment!" Nie Donghai glared at her and said, "All other matters need to be put on hold. You need to go find the best doctors in Black Cloud City now. I need them to bring down Nie Tian's fever as quickly as possible. I can tell that his temperature is still climbing!"

"What? His temperature is still rising?" Nie Qian panicked and forgot about finding Nie Beichuan to settle their dispute. Sounding very anxious, she said, "I'll go right away!"

Saying these words, she rushed out of the Nie clan, her heart tearing apart from anxiety.

Two hours later, three renowned doctors from Black Cloud City were gathered around Nie Tian.

The three famous doctors tried various methods including medicine decoction, acupuncture, and ice compresses, all in the hopes of bringing down his fever.

Soon it was midnight, yet Nie Tian's high fever didn't show any signs of improvement.

Even though the three reputable doctors had already exhausted all of their methods to bring down his fever, Nie Tian's body temperature didn't reduce in the slightest.

"Good-for-nothing!" Nie Donghai cursed, so enraged that he was panting. "None of you can cure a simple fever. How dare you call yourselves reputable doctors!"

The doctors didn't dare to disagree and left the Nie clan in shame.

The following afternoon.

Both Nie Donghai and Nie Qian's eyes were bloodshot as they watched another doctor from Black Cloud City pick up his medicine chest and walk out of Nie Tian's room, likewise unable to do anything.

Nie Donghai hadn't shut his eyes at all that night. He gently caressed Nie Tian's forehead and discovered that his body temperature was still at a dangerously high level.

"Spread the word," Nie Donghai shouted. "whoever can bring down Nie Tian's fever, from Black Cloud City or not, will receive a handsome reward from me!"

"Understood!" came the reply.



Another day passed.

Every renowned doctor in Black Cloud City and other nearby cities came upon hearing the news. They all spared no effort in their attempts to bring Nie Tian's temperature down in exchange for the significant reward from Nie Donghai.

However, night fell and Nie Tian's fever hadn't gotten any better.

Hearing that Nie Tian suddenly got sick, Nie Beichuan and other elders in the Nie clan had also come to visit. However they didn't push Nie Donghai to give up his position at that moment.

Deep into the night.

Nie Donghai and Nie Qian helplessly looked at Nie Tian, whose body had turned red due to the fever, their faces filled with despair.

Nie Qian sobbed as she mumbled from time to time, "My poor little sister wouldn't be able to rest in peace if she knew that I failed to take care of Little Tian. Little Tian is only ten. If anything happens to him, I don't want to live either. Those clan members want us to suffer anyways, we might as well die together... "

"Shut up!" Nie Donghai raged. "If you dare say another ominous word, watch me slap your mouth!"

"Father, you have to think of a way to save him!" Nie Qian yelled.

"That's exactly what I'm doing!!" Nie Donghai said with a dark look. "Over the years, I could say that I've dedicated myself to the Cloudsoaring sect. Now that I am old and ready to step down, the Cloudsoaring sect's immortals might give me some face and save Nie Tian!"

"You get ready, we take Nie Tian to the Cloudsoaring sect now. I'll kneel in front of the sect's gate and plead for their help!"

"Very well. I'll make arrangements immediately!" Nie Qian's eyes suddenly burned with hope.

She knew very well that the advanced Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect possessed incredibly divine abilities. If they were willing to spend some energy to help Nie Tian, he might live.

Just as Nie Donghai and Nie Qian were about to leave for the Cloudsoaring sect, the maidservant Han Yue barged in and yelled loudly, "Clanmaster! Clanmaster! There's another doctor here who claims to be able to save Little Tian!"

## Chapter 9: A Foreign Doctor

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"Father, let's go to the Cloudsoaring sect. All those other doctors failed, I refuse to believe this new one can help!"

Nie Qian was in a state of utter desperation. Deep down, she believed only the lofty and powerful Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect could cure Nie Tian's strange disease.

Nie Donghai was also full of hesitation.

It had been three days. Not only had all the reputable doctors in Black Cloud City come, but also the famous doctors from other nearby cities. They had all utilized the best methods possible to try to get that substantial reward. In the end, Nie Tian's condition didn't improve in the slightest.

Nie Donghai had always respected the supremely capable Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect, therefore he also believed that only the Cloudsoaring sect could help Nie Tian.

As Nie Donghai stood there, brows furrowed and lost in thought, Han Yue timidly continued, "Clanmaster... That doctor seems to be a newcomer. He said that if he failed, he would let you dispose of him at will, clanmaster."

"Dispose at will?" Nie Donghai's expression flickered. "Knowing every doctor before him failed, he dared to talk so big? Perhaps, this man truly has a special method?"

"Pass word down. Tell him to come as soon as possible!"

"Yes." Han Yue rushed out.

Before long, a short and dark-skinned old man slowly walked in with a small medicine chest on his shoulder.

The old man had a narrow scar stretching from his lower jaw to the middle of his chest, which made him seem horrifying.

His eyeballs were covered with white spots and his pupils were extremely small. Together with the horrible scar, they made the old man seem even more spooky and fearsome.

Alarmed, Nie Donghai secretly probed the man with his spiritual power. However he found no fluctuations of spiritual energy inside of him. It seemed he wasn't a Qi warrior.

"I'm Hua Mu and nothing but an old man," the doctor said, "I spend most of my time searching for medicinal herbs in the depths of mountains. Today, as I was passing through Black Cloud City, I heard that your noble child was having a terrible fever. I've been a doctor for many years and I've quite a bit of experience dealing with rare diseases. I believe I can bring down the child's fever. Please allow me a try, clanmaster."

As he talked, Hua Mu looked from Nie Donghai and Nie Qian over to Nie Tian, who was lying in the bed off to the side.

When he looked at Nie Tian, a strange light of excitement shone in his bizarre eyes, which were almost completely white, the pupils being only tiny dots

"Do you indeed have the confidence to cure him?" Nie Donghai said with a dour expression. "All of the well-known doctors from the surrounding area have already tried, but every one of them has failed. My grandson is still suffering from the fever. If we cannot cure him soon, I fear that he won't be able to make it. I was about to leave for the Cloudsoaring sect and I do not wish to waste our valuable time if you are incompetent."

Hua Mu looked back at Nie Donghai. He inhaled briefly, closed his eyes, and then opened them again suddenly. "If I can't cure him," he said decisively, "then I'll part with my head!"

"Very well!" Nie Donghai replied, looking shocked.

"Enough chit-chat!" Hua Mu said. "Fetch me a big wooden barrel and fill it with hot water!"

"As you wish!" Nie Donghai nodded forcefully and instructed servants to do as Hua Mu says.

Servants of the Nie clan, who had been waiting anxiously outside the door, immediately started to bustle about.

Shortly after, under the maidservant Han Yue's direction, several

servants carried a big wooden barrel full of hot water to the center of the room.

"Clanmaster Nie, I need everyone to leave the room, including you. There can't be anyone else in this room except for the child and me." Hua Mu tilted his chin up, looking more than a bit arrogant. "My unique secret method can't be seen by anyone. It is my means of survival, so please forgive me, clanmaster Nie."

"Father, how can we allow this?" Nie Qian protested in dissatisfaction. "I need to watch Little Tian at all times!"

Hua Mu rolled his eyes and said coldly, "I gave you my word: if I fail to cure him, I'll leave you my head! This is the Nie clan. I'm a foreigner and not a Qi warrior. If I had evil intentions, how could I manage to walk out of the Nie clan alive?"

"Listen to him," Nie Donghai said after pondering for a moment. Then he bowed deeply to Hua Mu. Eyes filled with supplication, he said, "I, Nie Donghai, offer thanks to Dr. Hua Mu. As long as Little Tian is healed, I will definitely offer a handsome reward!"

Hua Mu's expression didn't change, but he gave a slight nod.

"Follow me out!" Nie Donghai shouted.

Under his command, everyone, including Nie Qian, had to exit the room temporarily.

CREAK!

Nie Donghai slowly closed the door and sat down in front of it. He constantly tried to adjust his mental state by inhaling and exhaling as he waited there anxiously.

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Nie Kan cautiously entered one of the secret rooms in the Nie clan to report in to Nie Beichuan, who was in the middle of cultivation. "Father, another doctor has come to save Nie Tian."

Nie Beichuan had his back against an ice-cold black jade pillar, and was surrounded by frosty air. Face dark and cold, he said, "It surprises me that someone seeks a reward that small."

After a moment, he pressed his lips into a line and said disdainfully, "Nie Donghai is going downhill. How can it be easy to have our clan members help him find the right doctor? Over the years, he has been spending his savings to track down Nie Tian's birth father. How much can he have in reserve?"

"That's true." Nie Kan let out a chuckle. "He doesn't know that you have one of the Cloudsoaring sect's Soul Replenishing Pills, father. A Soul Replenishing Pill is a precious item. Nie Tian's minor illness would be easily wiped out if he took it."

"Nie Hong is my real grandson. If Nie Hong caught this strange disease, I would have already given him the pill." Nie Beichuan had

nothing but indifference on his face. "Back when Nie Donghai and I fought for the position of clanmaster, he was in his prime. In order to win the position, he didn't give me, his younger brother, the slightest bit of face. However, times change. His time has passed and it is now my turn to take advantage of the momentum and rise up."

Nie Kan frowned. "I've always felt there's something special with that little punk Nie Tian," he said. "I can't seem to stop worrying about him. He managed to beat Hong'er, despite having a significantly lower cultivation base. He is indeed different. It's good news that he caught that strange disease. Otherwise... he could be a hidden trouble for us in the future."

Nie Beichuan's eyes burned with excitement. "If Nie Tian dies of this disease, I guess my eldest brother's only remaining mental support would collapse. Before long, he would be gone as well. Then I'll have no more obstacles within the clan."

"It won't be long. In my opinion, you won't have to wait much longer, father." Nie Kan also became high-spirited and vigorous.

"I think so too," Nie Beichuan agreed, his head held up high.

On the other side of the clan....

After Nie Donghai and others left the room, the mysterious doctor Hua Mu immediately pulled numerous containers out of his small medicine chest, one after another.



Those bottles and jars were filled with liquids of various colors. All kinds of strange odors escaped through the corks of the bottles and jars.

Some of them gave out fragrant scents, some of the jars gave out sour scents, while others gave out pungent scents.

If Nie Donghai hadn't left, the names labeled on those medicine bottles would have driven him crazy.

Every single one of them was among the rarest treasures, whose value was far beyond the reward he had offered.

Hua Mu swiftly popped open a bottle and poured the blue medicinal brew into the big wooden barrel filled with hot water.

"Nie Donghai, your so-called handsome reward is not even as valuable as three drops of my refined Netherworld Water." Hua Mu emptied the entire bottle of Netherworld Water into the wooden barrel.

After the last drop of Netherworld Water fell into the barrel, layers of dazzling blue light lingered in the air before slowly sinking down into the hot water.

Without pausing for a moment, Hua Mu emptied more medicine bottles into the wooden barrel, one after another.

All the brews inside those bottles were of the same level as the

Netherworld Water. Some were even more precious items rarely found in this world.

However, Hua Mu didn't hesitate in the slightest, and generously poured all of them into the barrel.

He briefly let out a sigh of relief, before walking to Nie Tian's side and examining him closely, with strange green light coming out of his eyes.

Hua Mu's face grew more serious as he carefully reached out with his palm and placed it under Nie Tian's back. Then he gently lifted the unconscious and feverish Nie Tian, fearing that he would feel any discomfort.

He was so nervous it seemed as if he were holding a rare treasure instead of a boy.

He moved to the barrel and gently lowered Nie Tian into it little by little.

BLUB BLUB BLUB.

As soon as Nie Tian entered the barrel, the hot medicinal water mixed by Hua Mu began to boil, as though it had suddenly reached a boiling point.

# Chapter 10: The Fever Subsides

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Soaked in the water, the unconscious Nie Tian's exposed skin turned red and kept growing darker.

BLUB BLUB.

One by one, bubbles floated to the water surface before they burst and let out a light green mist.

The whole room gradually filled with a medicinal aroma. The surface of the boiling water also shone with a strange green luster under the flickering candlelight.

"Ugh..." Nie Tian unconsciously groaned in the boiling water. It seemed that pores all over his body were being forcibly opened up and greedily sucking in the medicine in the water.

Unexpectedly, his body, stronger than a normal child's, bulked up gradually as if it were being inflated with air.

CRACK! CRACK!

Strange sounds came from his bones and internal organs. It almost seemed like his whole body was cheering and shouting.

Next, Hua Mu created a faint, flickering shield, in the shape of a sphere that enveloped Nie Tian and the barrel, with himself at the

center.

"Ow!"

Nie Tian couldn't help but start screaming out loud. However, his sharp cries seemed unable to penetrate that layer of light.

Ripples could be seen on the shield, as if it was a liquid surface. The shield had blocked all forms of sounds, and as a result, Nie Donghai and Nie Qian didn't notice a thing, despite being just outside of the room.

Hua Mu stared at Nie Tian attentively, with an expression of both excitement and respect. His focused eyes seemed like two balls of green, ghostly fire.

ZZZZZLA!

Traces of colorful lights kept entering and exiting Nie Tian's pores. Nie Tian continued to cry out as the murky water slowly turned clear.

It was as if all the precious medicine Hua Mu poured into the water had been absorbed by Nie Tian, through his pores and into his blood and flesh.

As the water cleared up, Nie Tian's temperature also gradually cooled down.

After a while, Nie Tian's body gradually stopped aching and he no longer screamed out in pain. Meanwhile, the faint shield created by Hua Mu turned into streams of light that flew back into Hua Mu's body and disappeared.

The boiling water also became calm. Nie Tian, after being in a coma for three days, finally opened his eyes. The fever was gone.

At that moment, the strange light in Hua Mu's eyes vanished.

He knelt down next to Nie Tian and calmly said, "I am Hua Mu. I'm here to cure your fever at your grandfather's request."

Nie Tian had yet to recover his thoughts. He only blankly asked, "How long did my fever last?"

"Three days," Hua Mu replied calmly.

"Three days!" Nie Tian turned pale with fear. He grabbed onto the sides of the barrel in order to leap out of it.

KAH CHA!

The sturdy wooden barrel couldn't withstand his power and shattered into pieces.

WHOOOOSH!

Water splashed all over, startling Nie Tian, who then watched all the fragments of the wooden barrel scatter everywhere.

Hua Mu remained calm, as if he knew this would happen. Voice cool, he said, "Your special disease is not completely cured yet. You will have to continue to bathe in my medicine for six more days."

Nie Tian lifted his hands and randomly stretched his arms. Instantly, he felt he could draw much more power from his body than before.

"I feel great," Nie Tian said nonchalantly. "I don't think I'm going to have another fever."

"I'm the doctor here," Hua Mu said in tone that offered no argument. "I cured your special disease after everyone else failed. So believe me when I say that you have to continue the treatment!"

"Oh, okay." Nie Tian scratched his head.

Nie Donghai, who had been waiting outside the room in desperate anxiety, couldn't restrain himself any longer after hearing the wooden barrel cracking and the sound of Hua Mu and Nie Tian talking. "Mr. Hua, I... Can I come in now?"

"Enter!" Hua Mu said calmly.

SLAM!

Nie Donghai shoved the door open and barged into the room with Nie Qian, who looked just as worried.

Upon entering, he went to Nie Tian's side and reached out his hand to feel Nie Tian's wrist. Discovering that Nie Tian's fever was gone and that his body temperature was back to normal, his face immediately filled with joy.

Before Hua Mu could say anything, Nie Donghai called out loudly, "Han Yue, present the rewards to Mr. Hua!"

The maidservant Han Yue soon came in with a bag filled with gold, silver, and other valuables, together with some spirit stones and medicinal ingredients, and respectfully handed it over to Hua Mu.

Hua Mu grabbed it arrogantly, not even sparing it a glance as he stuffed it into his medicine chest. It almost seemed as if he couldn't care less about the rewards.

"No words can express my gratitude for your great kindness," Nie Donghai said. "Mr. Hua, you simply must spend a few more days in the Nie clan as my honored guest."

Hua Mu shook his head. "He is not fully cured yet. I'll come at this time of the day for the next six days. You just need to prepare a wooden barrel filled with hot water, and I'll apply the same

approach to permanently cure your grandson of this odd disease."

Nie Donghai's face tightened. "He isn't completely cured?"

"No need to worry. He will be fine." Hua Mu raised his chin slightly and confidently added, "I told you I could save him and I did. Now that I've proved myself, you should have a little faith."

"Of course! Of course!" Nie Donghai replied immediately before he bowed with his hands clasped in front as a sign of respect. "Sorry to burden Mr. Hua with this for the next few days. Mr. Hua, since it is your first time in Black Cloud City, I bet you haven't found a place to stay, right? Why don't you stay in the Nie clan? Please rest assured. I'll see to it that you get the most comfortable guest room we have and no one will dare to neglect your demand."

"There's no need of that. I personally like things quiet. I'll just attend to some of my own personal affairs in the city." Hua Mu seemed to have lost interest in talking to Nie Donghai. After speaking those words, he strode outside.

After Hua Mu had left, Nie Tian couldn't help but ask, "Grandfather, who is this man? And how did I end up with a high fever for three days?"

"You foolish child!" Nie Qian said, heart aching. "After your battle with Nie Hong, you contracted a fever that very night. By the time I found out, you were already unconscious. We called all the renowned doctors in and around Black Cloud City for you, but none of them could cure you. Just as we were getting ready to take



you to the Cloudsoaring sect, Mr. Hua unexpectedly showed up..."

She explained the whole course of the incident in detail, before she asked, "Well? How do you feel? Do you feel weak?"

"No, not weak." Nie Tian shook his head as an odd expression appeared on his face. "On the contrary, I feel... good. No, I mean perfect!"

"What do you mean?" Nie Donghai was astonished.

"After my fever subsided, I felt that I had endless power and strength, as if I was stronger than ever." Nie Tian was careful with his selection of words. "The spiritual power in my dantian hasn't changed much. However, I can feel that my physical strength must have improved significantly."

"That's odd." Nie Donghai looked at him deeply, his face clouded by suspicion.

"It's good that you're fine." Nie Qian didn't bother to overthink the matter. "Try to avoid fighting Nie Hong as long as possible. His cultivation base is three levels higher than yours and his spiritual power can flow outside of his body, and yet you chose to fight him anyway. I bet the reason behind your fever was that fight between the two of you. If you can't beat him, just give up. You're of a much lower cultivation level. Losing isn't too bad. Don't be so stubborn."

"I believe if I were to fight Nie Hong again, I would easily defeat

him this time!" Nie Tian said, grinning with radiant confidence.

"You still want to act tough! I don't want to see you pass out from a high fever ever again! We were lucky that Mr. Hua was in Black Cloud City, otherwise..." With these words, Nie Qian started to sob again. "If anything bad really happened to you, I couldn't bear to keep living... I would be too ashamed to face your mother in the underworld after I died!"

"Okay, okay, I get it," Nie Tian said, sounding a bit annoyed. "I promise I won't mess around."

"Stay at home for the next couple of days," Nie Donghai lectured sternly. "Don't go anywhere!"

Nie Tian had no other option than to nod his head. "Alright."

Meanwhile, inside Nie Beichuan's cultivation room.

Nie Kan walked into the room with a gloomy face and said in a pitiful tone, "Father, that foreign doctor managed to cure Nie Tian's high fever."

After channeling a strand of frost Qi into his dantian from the black jade pillar against his back, Nie Beichuan opened his eyes. "Now that Nie Tian is fine, I'll go talk to my eldest brother," he said grimly. "He should have come clear with the clan's elders and handed over his position as clanmaster yesterday as he promised."

"He should have done that long ago," Nie Kan said vigorously. "With him as head of the clan, it is very inconvenient for us to make any moves. But from now on... things will be better."

"Although it's a little late, I don't think he has slept yet." Nie Beichuan rose to his feet and left the secret room to talk to Nie Donghai.

# Chapter 11: The Miraculous Dreamland

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That night...

Knowing Nie Tian had suffered far too much during the past several days, Nie Qian convinced him to go to bed early, then followed Nie Donghai out of the room.

In the dead of night, Nie Tian still couldn't fall asleep. He sat up on his bed and started to practice the Qi Refining Incantation, absorbing the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth to enhance his cultivation.

As Nie Tian started his breathing exercises, strands of faint spiritual Qi around him were absorbed and channeled into his dantian's spiritual sea.

All his awareness concentrated inwardly, Nie Tian could clearly feel some changes as those strands of spiritual Qi entered his dantian.

Before, when he practiced the Qi Refining Incantation, he would find that the majority of the spiritual Qi scattered and dissipated into his flesh and limbs instead of gathering into his dantian.

But this time, it seemed as if his flesh and internal organs had already absorbed enough strength, and thus didn't forcibly take the spiritual Qi that had been brought into his body.

As he focused on practicing cultivation, he could faintly hear what seemed to be the sound of his flesh and blood cheering.

"This is strange..."

He felt confused, and redirected his spiritual awareness to his flesh and blood, instead of his dantian.

There, he perceived a strange aura brooding, which quietly began to glow.

In a split second, his soul seemed to be forcefully dragged into his blood, and his mind became increasingly blurry.

BOOM!

After a rumbling sound, Nie Tian, who originally was in the middle of cultivation, suddenly fell into an ancient dreamland!

It was a completely unknown world, a place that flourished with ancient trees and mountains peaks which reached high up into the clouds. In the distant sky was a void where giant, terrifying figures were only partly visible.

Groups of giants carried gigantic, pitch-black tree trunks that were hundreds of meters long on their shoulders. They strode with their heads held up high, as they sang ancient, desolate tunes to each other.

An enormous snake with glistening silver scales was wrapped around a mountain that was thousands of meters high. At first glance, it seemed as if the snake was actually part of the mountain.

The huge snake was breathing in spiritual energy and bathing in the light of the bright moon and the countless stars which hung high in the sky. The bright and shiny aura of the moon and stars poured down on the snake like a river, then melted into its giant body.

Further up in the sky, a splendid palace rested among thick clouds and flashing lightning bolts.

From the depths of the earth came sounds of furious snarling. Suddenly, the earth cracked open, creating a bottomless trench.

Dark-purple smoke, full of vicious ghouls and spirits, plumed up from the bottom of the trench.

One by one, a group of human figures in the distant horizon launched themselves into the sky. Each of them had a pair of huge, gray wings, a single flap of which could propel them hundreds of kilometers.

One unbelievable image after another flashed in front of Nie Tian in his dream.

It seemed as if Nie Tian had been pulled into a mysterious ancient

world and overlooking the miracles in this Heaven and Earth as a spectator.

WHOOH! WHOOH!

After an unknown period of time, Nie Tian violently woke up from the dream and started panting heavily.

His entire body was soaked with sweat. He felt so extremely exhausted physically that he could barely move his fingers.

"What a miraculous dream! What a stupendous world!"

He stared at the flickering candle flame, his eyes glittering like bright stars. At the same time, his face displayed an expression of incomparable aspiration and excitement.

He never felt a smidgen of sleepiness later that night, as if he was completely fascinated by that dream and was reluctant to stop thinking about it.

When the night had passed and the roosters crows signaled the start of the morning, he finally experienced a sudden exhaustion and fell into a deep sleep.

Early in the morning, Nie Donghai gathered all the elders of the Nie clan in the meeting hall. Under the presence of all the immediate and extended members of the clan, he declared that he was no longer as energetic as before, and would thus retire from

his position as head of the clan.

"Eldest Brother, you can trust me," Nie Beichuan said in great confidence. Under my command, the Nie clan will definitely return to its prime!"

"I believe you are capable of achieving that," Nie Donghai said with a nod of his head. Then he slowly walked out of the meeting hall under the whole clan's gaze.

"Father..." Seeing him coming out of the hall, Nie Qian wished to comfort him, but held back after a moment of thought.

She could see the intense reluctance in Nie Donghai's eyes as he left the hall.

Having been tortured by his condition for years, Nie Donghai had already lost his majestic and powerful body. Now that he had stepped down from the position of clanmaster, it seemed as if he had suddenly aged several years and became extremely spiritless and weak.

"I'm fine. Don't worry." Nie Donghai forced a smile onto his face. "My heart is exhausted. Those clan elders have lost their patience with me long ago. If I keep hogging the position, it will only bring us more trouble. This is good. I'll get to spend all my energy on Nie Tian.

"I only hope that Nie Tian can win the Cloudsoaring sect's favor



and get admitted before I die.

"That would be my last extravagant wish."

Inside the hall, numerous members of the Nie clan clamored to congratulate to Nie Beichuan.

Listening to Nie Beichuan's proud laughter and the flattering from the clan elders, Nie Qian grew increasingly annoyed, and whispered to herself, "Every one of these clan elders used to treat father the exact same way before he got wounded. The times have changed. Now that father has stepped down, not even a single one of them bothered to console him."

Nie Donghai shook his head in frustration. "Such is life. I've seen through it already. When you are powerful, people naturally gather around you. Once you lose your power, people will instantly distance themselves from you, with birds being your only visitors. Come on, forget about them. Let's go see Nie Tian."

"I just hope Nie Tian can make something out of himself!" Nie Qian said bitterly.

She clearly understood that Nie Donghai had already placed all of his hope on Nie Tian.

If Nie Tian were able to display extraordinary talent in his future cultivation, it would be possible for Nie Donghai to regain his hope. Even though it would be unlikely for him to make any more

achievements in his own cultivation, as long as he could watch Nie Tian become stronger on a daily basis, Nie Donghai might be able to hang on to a proper life.

Nie Tian was now the only thing keeping him going mentally.

When Nie Donghai and Nie Qian got to Nie Tian's room, they discovered that Nie Tian's snores were sky-rending, and that he was sound asleep.

"He suffered a great deal over the past few days," Nie Donghai said quietly, looking down attentively at Nie Tian. "The kid... has gone through a lot. Let's not wake him."

"Sure," Nie Qian said with her heart aching.

As the night sky gradually darkened, Hua Mu appeared, just as they had agreed.

"Mr. Hua," Nie Donghai said respectfully, "the barrel and hot water are ready. Please work your magic and root out the child's illness."

"Of course." Hua Mu nodded. "You may vacant the room now. No need to wake him up."

Nie Donghai and Nie Qian walked out as they were told, just like the day before, and quietly waited outside the room.

After they left, Hua Mu duplicated his actions from the day before. He took bottles and jars out of his small medicine chest, then poured the medicinal brews into the barrel full of hot water.

Everything set and ready, he picked up the sleeping Nie Tian again and carefully placed him into the barrel.

As soon as Nie Tian sank down into the hot water, it instantly reached its boiling point and began to seethe again.

Nie Tian's entire body turned as red as a cooked shrimp and once again he couldn't help but wake up and start screaming in pain.

The strange thing was that although he didn't have a fever today, the moment he entered the wooden barrel, he lost consciousness anyway.

Hua Mu summoned a shield to insulate the sound, then quietly observed Nie Tian, eyes flickering with green, ghostly fires.

By the time the murky water inside the barrel became clear again, Hua Mu's expression had returned to normal and the light shield disappeared. Gradually, Nie Tian woke up.

The moment Nie Tian opened his eyes, he felt his body was brimming with strength, without a single trace of fatigue. "Thank you, Mr. Hua."

Hua Mu nodded his head, "I'll come back tomorrow." Then he shouldered his medicine chest and walked straight out of the Nie clan, without responding at all to the thanks offered by Nie Donghai and Nie Qian.

In the following days, Nie Tian practiced cultivation every night, and every night he fell into that mysterious dreamland. In that unknown world, Nie Tian would observe all kinds of unimaginable miracles.

Every time he woke up, he was always completely depleted of strength, yet only at dawn would he be able to fall asleep again.

Meanwhile, Hua Mu came every night at the agreed time and made Nie Tian experience a hellish pain with his magical medicinal brews.

Time flew, and soon it was the last day.

Nie Tian jumped out of the barrel of now clear water, his whole body red, and respectfully expressed his gratitude to Hua Mu.

Expression placid, Mu Hua asked, "Have you been dreaming lately?"

"How did you know?" Nie Tian exclaimed.

Hua Mu pondered something for a moment, and then lowered his voice. "I know the origin of your strange illness. But you must not

Speak of the matter to anyone, not even your grandfather or your aunt."

"Why?" Nie Tian asked, confused.

"Do not ask why," Hua Mu replied with a straight face. "As long as you promise me that, I'll give you a medicinal pill which can guarantee your grandfather ten more years of life."

Nie Tian immediately agreed. "Deal!"

He didn't need to hear it from others. Just by seeing Nie Donghai's current state, he knew that Nie Donghai didn't have much time to live.

Nie Donghai's deteriorating health had always been his greatest concern. Nie Tian had already promised himself long ago that once he became strong and powerful, the first thing he would do would be to find the best medicines that could help Nie Donghai.

"You have to understand that the medicinal pill won't heal your grandfather," Hua Mu explained, "It will only prolong his life."

"I understand." Nie Tian took a deep breath as he clenched his fists and solemnly said, "Ten years! I'll exert all my effort to help him get better in ten years!"

"You have such a resolve. Very good." Hua Mu reached out his hand and gently patted Nie Tian on the shoulder, before he said

profoundly, "We'll meet again."

# Chapter 12: The Inconstant Nature Of People

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"Grandfather, Mr. Hua has left us a medicinal pill, which... supposedly could give you ten more years of life." Nie Tian handed the dark-green medicinal pill over to Nie Donghai.

"What?!" Nie Qian exclaimed. Excited, she turned and rushed out, hoping to catch up to Hua Mu and express her gratitude.

However, Hua Mu was nowhere to be found.

"A medicinal pill that can prolong my life by ten years?" Nie Donghai also cheered up a bit. He took the pill from Nie Tian's hand, took a deep sniff off of its intense medicinal scent. "If this is true, the value of this medicinal pill alone would far surpass the value of the rewards that we have paid him!"

Nie Qian was both shocked and happy. "Why would Mr. Hua Mu make such an unfavorable deal with us? Who is he?"

"He said..." Nie Tian hesitated and concocted a white lie. "That he and I were destined to meet."

"Destined?" Nie Donghai briefly frowned. "How strange. Both of you stay here. I'll go look for him in the city. No matter what, I want to thank him in person. He has been far too kind to the both of us."

Having said that, Nie Donghai took the initiative and left with the medicinal pill in hand.

Unfortunately, after searching in Black Cloud City for two straight days, he was unable to find any trace of Hua Mu. It seemed as if Hua Mu had disappeared into thin air, the same way he had appeared out of nowhere in the first place.

Nie Donghai was suspicious at first and observed Nie Tian for several days. Seeing that he no longer burst into high fevers, Nie Donghai was completely convinced that Hua Mu had no malicious motives.

He also believed that the medicinal pill Hua Mu had left him would most likely not harm him.

Therefore, he put his mind at ease and consumed the unnamed medicinal pill. In the next moment, he felt that his spirit and energy had indeed improved significantly.

Now that Nie Tian had recovered from the fever, whenever he cultivated using the Qi Refining Incantation, he could clearly feel the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth that he channeled into his body no longer continued to flow into his blood, muscles, and bones.

Apparently his robust body had already absorbed enough strength and no longer required extra nourishment to grow.



Three months later, Nie Tian finally broke through the third level of Qi Refining. After being stuck in the third level for so long, he successfully entered the fourth level of Qi Refining.

Meanwhile, it was almost Nie Tian's eleventh birthday.

These days, Nie Tian no longer went to the square to train early in the morning in order to avoid causing any trouble for his grandfather or getting involved in new conflicts himself.

Most of the time, he would train hard in his own room instead, and would occasionally take walks in Black Cloud City with his aunt Nie Qian.

One morning, he heard a loud uproar coming from the square when he was cultivating by himself.

The clamor grew so loud that he wasn't able to focus on his cultivation. Finally, he couldn't resist the temptation, and walked over to the square.

As he approached, he saw numerous Nie clan elders gathering in the square. Every one of them was radiant with joy, as if it was the New Year's festival.

Wu Tao, who was in charge of teaching the Nie clan children, also had a heartfelt and sincere smile on his face as he kept repeating the same sentence over and over, "Nie Xian has successfully broken through into the ninth level of Qi Refining!"

"Fourteen years old! The ninth level of Qi Refining!" Nie Tian was also shocked, and secretly felt happy for Nie Xian.

Even though he hadn't been close to Nie Xian, on many occasions where he had conflicts with Nie Hong or Nie Yuan, Nie Xian had sided with justice, unlike other members of the clan, who only supported and protected Nie Hong and Nie Yuan.

For that reason, he actually secretly thought highly of Nie Xian, although they weren't exactly good friends.

Knowing Nie Xian had reached the ninth level of Qi Refining at the age of fourteen, Nie Tian was sincerely happy for him.

He knew very well that the youngsters of the Nie clan who could reach the ninth level of Qi Refining before the age of fifteen, and therefore had the opportunity to pursue their cultivation in the Cloudsoaring sect, were all outstanding elites.

Nie Hong's two elder brothers, Nie Han and Nie Tai, both showed extraordinary talent when they were young, and had made great gains after their lot-drawing conventions.

However, Nie Tai had failed to reach the ninth level of Qi Refining by fifteen, and thus got rejected by the Cloudsoaring sect.

Only his eldest brother, Nie Han, had managed to break through into the ninth level when he was exactly fifteen and became a

disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect.

According to the rumors, Nie Han did quite well after spending several years in the Cloudsoaring sect. Actually, a number of people in the Cloudsoaring sect believed he would have a bright future.

Nie Beichuan being able to get the support of Nie clan's elders and successfully succeeding as the clanmaster was due to a number of reasons. Besides the fact that Nie Donghai was injured and his cultivation base kept degrading, Nie Han... was also a very important factor.

"Excellent! Good Job!" Nie Beichuan stood amongst the crowd and threw an appreciative look at Nie Xian, then said in a loud voice, "I've told all of you that since I've become head of the clan, I would spare no effort to make the Nie clan great again! Nie Xian being able to make such a breakthrough and become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect is a good omen that our clan is on its way to prosperity!"

A large number of Nie clan members congratulated Nie Beichuan, their faces full of smiles, as if it was his meritorious service that resulted in Nie Xian reaching the ninth level of Qi Refining.

"Haha, it's all because of the clanmaster!"

"The moment you took over, Nie Xian managed to reach the ninth level of Qi Refining. Obviously, you are the reason the Nie clan is thriving!"

"In your hands, the Nie clan will absolutely reach new heights and crush the Yun clan and the An clan in the near future!"

"... "

Being in center of the square, Nie Xian was also surrounded by people who congratulated him. However, he kept calm and did nothing but politely express his gratitude. He didn't appear to be very excited.

Nie Beichuan, however, continued to attempt to win over people's hearts. "Nie Xian, although you are from an extended branch of our clan, due to your success, your mother and younger sister shall move into the Nie clan mansion, effective immediately. You only need concentrate on your cultivation in the Cloudsoaring sect. With regards to other matters, you don't need to burden yourself, as I'll personally make all the appropriate arrangements."

Nie Xian had a mother and a younger sister. Being from an extended branch and women, they technically shouldn't have the right to live in the Nie clan mansion.

"Many thanks, clanmaster," Nie Xian said softly.

"You're welcome. You've earned it." Nie Beichuan filled his face with a smile, "I've already informed the Cloudsoaring sect of your successful breakthrough into the ninth level of Qi Refining. In the afternoon, your eldest brother Nie Han, together with others from the Cloudsoaring sect, will take you to the Cloudsoaring sect. Once

you arrive there, all you have to do is follow Nie Han. He has already made all the arrangements for you."

"I understand," Nie Xian nodded his head.

Nie Tian stood by himself in a corner of the square as he watched Nie Xian, who was being praised by everyone, and Nie Beichuan, who was proud and full of ambitions.

In that moment, Nie Tian made a promise to himself. "The ninth level of Qi Refining! People from the Cloudsoaring sect will take me to their mountain too, one day!"

At some point, Nie Qian had appeared next to him. "Why are you here?" she said quietly. "This has nothing to do with you. If you want to enter the Cloudsoaring sect, you must work extra hard. You're almost eleven. Although you've made a breakthrough recently, you've only reached the fourth level. You cannot waste too much time on irrelevant matters."

"Auntie, I'll catch up in the future," he replied, full of confidence.

"It's nice you have such confidence." Nie Qian smiled. "You've already been distracted. It will be very noisy in the Nie clan today. People like us, who aren't welcome here, shouldn't stay in the clan and become eyesores. Come on, let's take a walk in the city."

"Alright." Nie Tian nodded obediently.

Then he followed Nie Qian out of the Nie clan. They had lunch at a restaurant in Black Cloud City, and later in the afternoon, they went to the biggest jewelry shop in the city to purchase some jewels and accessories.

Just as Nie Tian and Nie Qian walked out of the jewelry shop, the sharp, mean voice of a woman entered their ears. "Yo! Isn't this the Nie clan's eldest sister who has been divorced by my husband Zhiguo?"

Nie Tian's keen perception allowed him to notice that Nie Qian shivered upon hearing the words.

Nie Tian traced the source of the voice and found a man, a woman, and a boy about his age walking towards them. Clearly, they planned to enter the same jewelry shop.

The man was dressed in white, and his face was like a piece of warm jade. His overall appearance was rather elegant and handsome.

The woman had her long hair coiled up and wore a perfectly fit green overskirt. She looked elegant and extraordinary, with a face as pretty as a flower.

The boy, whose hands were held by the couple, seemed to have inherited merits from both his parents. Despite being so young, he was already very good looking.

The man looked a bit guilty when he saw it was Nie Qian, and he tried to pull his wife away.

"What's the rush?" said young woman, glaring at the man. "What? Don't tell me that you still have feelings for her!"

"Cut the nonsense," the man retorted.

"That's what I thought!" The woman snorted and focused on Nie Qian again. After a derisive laugh, she said, "You're the Nie clan's eldest sister, but I heard that your father has lost his position as head of the clan. How come you still have the kind of money to shop for jewelry? Hehe! What precious jewels have you bought? Can I have the honor to take a look?"

"Auntie, are they...?" Nie Tian said angrily.

He wasn't a child any more. Even though neither Nie Donghai nor Nie Qian had explained the specifics, he had heard many rumors and gossip from other clan members about what happened to his aunt, Nie Qian.

Just like the Nie clan and An clan, the Yun clan was a big clan in Black Cloud City. The Yun clan and the Nie clan had once been close.

Because of that, both families decided to arrange a marriage for their mutual benefit and had Nie Qian marry the Yun clan's Yun Zhiguo.

However, their marriage didn't last long, as Yun Zhiguo met Yuan Qiuying while traveling.

Yuan Qiuying was the daughter of the head of the Yuan clan, the most powerful clan in Frost Stone City, who were much stronger than the Nie clan.

Because of the aggressive affections of Yuan Qiuying, and secret push of the Yun clan, Yuan Qiuying eventually became Yun Zhiguo's wife.

Yun Zhiguo's original wife, Nie Qian, was framed for a crime she didn't commit, and they were divorced.

It was an utter humiliation to the Nie clan. Outraged, Nie Donghai had forced his way into the Yun clan over the matter, but was terribly wounded by the powerful experts of the Yun clan and the Yuan clan. After that, he was never able to recover from his injuries.

Both clans were backed by extremely strong Qi warrior sects, so even the Cloudsoaring sect was unwilling to go to war for the Nie clan. Eventually, the Nie clan reluctantly swallowed the bitter result.

Although Yuan Qiuying had successfully forced Nie Qian out of her way, she still couldn't let go of Yun Zhiguo and Nie Qian's past. Every time she ran into Nie Qian, she would mock and taunt her, without ever saying a single pleasant word.



Nie Qian grabbed Nie Tian by his arm and tried to pull him away from Yuan Qiuying. "Ignore them. Let's go."

"I won't leave!" Nie Tian said, standing there as unmoving as an iron spear planted into the ground.

## Chapter 13: Another Conflict

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"Don't cause trouble," Nie Qian said, glaring at him. "We still have things to do. Don't waste our time on these annoying people. Let's go."

As she spoke, she pulled harder on Nie Tian's arm, trying to get him away from the jewelry shop as soon as possible.

"Don't leave so fast," Yuan Qiuying said with an overtly vicious smile. "It's been so long since we've last met. Us sisters gotta catch up. What's to be afraid of? Is this the fatherless Nie Tian? Haha, didn't I hear days ago that he was dying? How pitiful is it to be a child both fatherless and motherless. Actually, living a life like that is a joke."

Nie Tian wrinkled his nose in disdain and snorted. "Old woman! You do have a mother and a father, but they failed at educating you! Only a shameless shrew would force a man to marry her, knowing he already has a wife!"

Yuan Qiuying almost exploded with anger. "Little bastard! Where did you learn to talk like that? How dare you insult me!"

Nie Tian's words perfectly poked at her weak spot. All these years, what she hated most was when people used this matter against her.

She knew that stealing Yun Zhiguo from Nie Qian wasn't exactly honorable, and she was also well aware of the fact that numerous

people in Black Cloud City had been talking about it and deemed her shameless.

However, since she came from the powerful Yuan clan, nobody dared to speak of the matter to her face.

She originally planned to humiliate Nie Qian for fun, but Nie Tian's words had lit up the anger in her, and she instantly lost her temper.

"I was just stating the truth," Nie Tian said with a snort. "Everyone knows what you've done. What? You can do it, but can't bear to hear people talk about it? You're afraid of people talking, yet you shamelessly stole someone else's husband? Have you no shame? Don't you care about losing face?"

"Little Tian!" Nie Qian called out anxiously.

What Nie Tian had said was exactly what she had been wanting to say, and hearing it did bring her pleasure, but she knew Yuan Qiuying well and she was afraid that she might snap in front of others.

"You fatherless, motherless bastard! I'll teach you some manners today!"

Yuan Qiuying's eyes were filled with burning flames of rage as she raised her left hand, ripples of purple spiritual energy emanating out from her palm.

Yun Zhiguo hurried to stop her. "Qiuying! We are in front of the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion. Don't lower yourself to the kid's level. People would laugh at us!"

By this point, a large number of passersby had sensed the mutual hostility, and had gathered nearby, keenly interested in whether or not open conflict would break out.

The onlookers even started to discuss the matter amongst themselves as they backed slowly away from Yuan Qiuying and Nie Qian.

"Hey, it's people from the Nie clan versus people from the Yun clan."

"They're about to put on a good show!"

"Yun Zhiguo's wife is acting as arrogant and rampant as always!"

"Her father is the master of Frost Stone City's Yuan clan. She can afford to behave that way."

"Well... the Nie clan is really unlucky to have gotten involved with this Yuan clan's unreasonable twat. It was because of her that Nie Donghai got terribly injured, which resulted in him losing his position as clanmaster. Absolutely tragic."

" ... "

Among the crowd was a young girl with a delicate face, who curiously looked on with her hand held by a burly middle-aged man with a square jaw.

The little girl was about Nie Tian's age. She was wearing a yellow dress and had numerous bright silver bracelets on her pale-skinned wrist. Her bright eyes flickered with wit and intelligence, and she just so happened to be munching on some sunflower seeds.

"Uncle Fan, what's happening over there?" the little girl asked with great interest.

The burly man with the square jaw looked at the domineering Yuan Qiuying. Frowning briefly, he proceeded to explain all the details to the girl in a low voice.

Having heard the whole story, the girl seemed shocked. "How come the woman surnamed 'Yuan' is so arrogant and rampant after stealing someone else's husband?"

"Because her last name is 'Yuan' and her father is Frost Stone City's Yuan Fengchun." The burly man let out a sigh. "Generally speaking, the Nie clan is attached to us, and Nie Donghai can be considered to have done years of hard work. Moreover, what happened wasn't the Nie clan's fault, so we should have stepped up and delivered justice, however..." The big man shook his head, his eyes showed a bit of shame.

"Aren't we supposed to protect those who depend on us?" the little girl said angrily.

The burly man's expression turned somewhat grim as he said, "Nie Donghai's second daughter was named Nie Jin. If she was alive, she would have been your elder martial sister according to seniority. She had an extremely outstanding cultivation talent just like you, so in the sect, she was treated as a 'seed', and an excess amount of cultivation resources were spent on her. Our sect had really high expectations of her.

"However... she made a terrible mistake in the prime of her life. She had a baby with a man whose identity hasn't been revealed to this day and she passed away shortly thereafter. All the precious materials our sect had spent were wasted. Many in our sect thought that Nie Donghai failed to educate her, thus they secretly resented him.

"The Yuan clan and the Yun clan were also well aware of this, and knew that Nie Donghai had lost our favor.

"It was because of this that Yuan Fengchun and Yun Meng dared to mess with him.

"Also because of this that those in our sect who had high expectations of Nie Jin and had placed significant stakes on her simply ignored what happened." The burly man quietly explained all the reasons behind it in detail.

After hearing the whole explanation, the little girl looked at the

distant Nie Qian and Nie Tian and murmured, "That family really has bad luck. "

Meanwhile....

As Yuan Qiuying was being held back by Yun Zhiguo, she noticed the large group of onlookers gathering around them. She suppressed her rage with great effort, and as she coldly glared at Nie Tian, she said, "Fine! I won't lower myself and bully a young kid!"

"Yun Song!" she called out to her son. "Go! Teach that little bastard a lesson on behalf of your mother!"

Upon hearing his mother's words, Yun Song, who had already found Nie Tian an eyesore, immediately rushed out like a swift leopard.

Seeing this, people made comments, but no one dared to actually step up and administer justice, since they were all in fear of the Yuan clan.

"I heard that Yun Zhiguo's son had broken through into the seventh level of Qi Refining three months ago. On the other hand, Nie Tian... seems to have barely entered the fourth level of Qi Refining after his high fever. The seventh level versus the fourth level is too ill-matched. This is completely an act of bullying!"

"That woman is always bullying people. What's there to fuss

about?"

"Good point."

"Nie Tian, don't fight him. Let's go!" Nie Qian's heart was torn with anxiety.

The recent battle between Nie Tian and Nie Hong had left her heart still fluttering with fear. Though Nie Tian had won the fight, he had burst into a high fever that very night. If it weren't for the fact that Hua Mu happened to be in Black Cloud City, Nie Tian would probably have already died.

Hua Mu had left Black Cloud City days ago, and his current whereabouts were untraceable. If Nie Tian had another outburst, who would be able to save him?

Just as she yelled, hoping to stop Nie Tian, Nie Tian suddenly broke free from her grasp and recklessly dashed towards Yun Song, without any regards to danger.

The square-faced man in the crowd looked on with glittering eyes. "Applaudable courage," he murmured to himself. "Unfortunately, the gap between their cultivation levels is too large. Courage alone simply isn't enough."

The little girl by his side seemed to enjoy battling by nature. The moment she saw Nie Tian and Yun Song beginning to fight, she immediately got excited and couldn't stop cheering.



BOOSH! BOOSH!

One after another, fireballs flew out of Yun Song's clenched fists, like burning stones, and smashed directly towards Nie Tian's face.

Those balls of flame were one step ahead of Yun Song's fist, which was drawing near to Nie Tian!

The seventh level of Qi Refining! Spiritual power breakaway!

This was a higher and better way of commanding spiritual power than the spiritual power overflow of the sixth level.

The spiritual power overflow of the sixth level could only allow spiritual power to flow from the dantian's spiritual sea to the surface of the cultivator's body. However, the spiritual power wouldn't completely leave the body, and could only wreath the arms and fists.

It was the breakaway spiritual power of the seventh level that would allow spiritual power to break away from the body and fly out of the fist before it directly hit the enemy.

Power at this level was terrifyingly stronger than the power of Nie Hong's lightening-covered fists!

POW! POW! POW!

Numerous reddish-orange fireballs rained down onto Nie Tian's forehead and back.

Nie Tian's clothes and hair instantly ignited as the flames tried their best to penetrate his skin to get to his flesh. The pain was so unbearable that he had to cry out.

Just as Yun Song's fist was about to reach him, he dropped to the ground and started to roll, extinguishing the flames on his body and hair.

When he got up again, there was a big, round hole burnt into the back of his shirt, and his hair was pluming black smoke. He didn't look good.

"Ha ha ha!"

Seeing him in such sore straits, Yun Song didn't rush to make the next move, but instead burst into laughter.

He planned to take his time to humiliate Nie Tian.

# Chapter 14: Reappearance Of The Strange Power!

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The Cloudsoaring sect's burly man shook his head and sighed as he said, "His cultivation base is far too poor. This kid must be ten years old now, yet he's merely reached the fourth level of Qi Refining. What a pity! His father must have been mediocre, otherwise... his talent shouldn't be like this."

"That elder martial sister of mine, was her talent really that amazing?" the little girl asked curiously.

"She reached the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of ten," explained the burly man. "In a place like the Nie clan, such talent could be counted as outstanding."

The little girl was instantly filled with respect, and she said, "That's truly impressive."

Although she had also reached the ninth level of Qi Refining, she clearly understood her current achievement was very much because of her family background.

Only with the help of numerous precious materials and magical tools did she manage to reach her current cultivation level. Those things had played a crucial part.

Nie Jin had been from the Nie family, which was only a vassal of the Cloudsoaring sect, and certainly didn't have the access to the

numerous precious medicinal ingredients like she did.

Considering Nie Jin managed to achieve the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of ten, there could be no other explanation than her extraordinary talent.

Normally, Nie Tian, being Nie Jin's son, should have inherited his parents' talents to some extent.

Even if Nie Tian's father was merely a mortal, solely relying on his mother's talent, Nie Tian should not be so weak.

"Little Tian! Come home with me. If you push things too far you could get hurt!!" Seeing Nie Tian take so many heavy blows, Nie Qian was getting rattled. "I don't need you to avenge me! Come back with me, quickly!"

"Once the battle has begun, it can't be stopped!" Yuan Qiuying said, her expression cold and indifferent. She blurred into action and flashed to Nie Qian's side, emanating waves of spiritual power, a clear sign that she was attempting to stop Nie Qian from interfering with the battle. "That's my son fighting the little punk, so it can't be considered me bullying a young child.

"They are peers. If he loses, you just have his poor cultivation base to blame, not me."

Yuan Qiuying looked down her nose at Nie Tian, who still had smoke coming out of his hair. Secretly, she felt relieved. She

couldn't wait for her son to launch more vicious strikes at Nie Tian and make him look more bedraggled.

Nie Tian's earlier comments had hit her right in her sore point, and now the deep hatred she felt towards him was rooted in her bones.

Yun Song was laughing complacently; obviously he could read his mother's intentions. Seeing that Yuan Qiuying had quietly blocked Nie Qian's path, and was even hinting for him to strike to kill, he attacked again.

BZZZ BZZZ!

One ball of orange flame after another flew towards Nie Tian as Yun Song switched to another spiritual incantation.

It seemed those balls of fire suddenly could move according to Yun Song's will after leaving his palm. They gathered into groups of three, forming vertical triangles which flew off and chased Nie Tian down from different directions.

After his shirt and hair were burnt by the fireballs, Nie Tian was well aware of how powerful they were, so this time he didn't try to fight it directly, but instead he constantly moved around to dodge them.

"Ha ha!" A grin filled Yun Song's little face as he continued to release more flames, then shoot them out in the form of fireballs.

Dozens of fireballs were flying about, pinning down Nie Tian, each of them like a small sun.

Waves of burning heat emanated from those fireballs, making the area where Nie Tian stood more and more unbearably hot.

Surrounded by the fireballs, Nie Tian could only dodge them as best he could and try to avoid being burnt.

As Yun Song released more and more fireballs, the space left for Nie Tian to move about in grew smaller and smaller.

Having deliberately released numerous fireballs and spent considerable mental power on controlling them, Yun Song also had sweat on his forehead, due to his significant consumption of spiritual power and energy.

"Fancy, but unpractical!" The little girl with a delicate jade-like face stopped eating her sunflower seeds and completely focused her attention on Yun Song and Nie Tian's battle. She gently frowned and said, "He's condensed too many fireballs and spent too much energy on controlling them, so they are rather pleasant to watch, but not very effective.

The burly man beside her nodded before commenting, "That Yun clan kid's battling techniques are indeed too flashy. With his seventh level of Qi Refining cultivation base, if he had concentrated on controlling three fireballs, their speed and agility would have been two levels higher.

"If there were only three fireballs, that Nie Clan kid would have been hit long ago. He might have already lost the battle by now.

"He's been spreading his energy too thin, causing all of his numerous fireballs to move a bit slower. Because of that, the Nie clan kid still has the time and space to move about."

After a brief pause, the man continued, "However, due to the increasing amount of fireballs, the Nie clan kid has less and less room to move about. Losing is just a matter of time."

"It's fundamentally because of the huge gap between their cultivation bases," the little girl said, sounding a bit sad.

BANG!

Just at that time, a fist-sized fireball hit Nie Tian right on the chest, right before he could dodge it.

Once again, Nie Tian's shirt was immediately set on fire and threads of flame power seized the chance to enter his body.

The pain left Nie Tian staggering. As a larger swarm of fireballs flew his way, it seemed he was on the verge of being overtaken.

"Nie Tian!" Nie Qian let out a shrill cry, preparing to stop the fight despite Yuan Qiuying's obstruction.

The burly man from the Cloudsoaring sect, who had been standing among the onlookers, didn't look very happy either.

Nie Tian's cultivation base was merely in the fourth level of Qi Refining, while the power contained in the fireballs were from Yun Song, who was in the seventh level.

If all of the fireballs eventually hit Nie Tian, he would surely suffer from severe injuries, and would be lucky to make it out alive.

The burly man was with the Cloudsoaring sect and since Nie Tian was a member of the Nie clan which was affiliated with the Cloudsoaring sect, he absolutely couldn't watch the Yun clan child kill Nie Tian in front of him.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

Nie Tian's heart started to race at this desperate moment.

But just then, he felt a mysterious force, that had been hidden deep in his flesh, burst out without even the slightest hesitation!

The flame power that Yun Song had left in Nie Tian was instantly wiped out, and it seemed he was no longer influenced by the residual fire damage.



He threw himself in face of the fireballs and swooped towards Yun Song with his eyes filled with killing intent, like a ferocious monster.

BANG! BANG!

One after one, fireballs rained on Nie Tian, yet he didn't feel any pain.

The burning spiritual power contained in those fireballs vanished the moment it reached his skin. Not a single bit of the flame power could penetrate into his body through his pores.

He had successfully broken through the storm of fireballs!

The burly man from the Cloudsoaring sect had been just about to intervene, but now his mouth hung open and the word "stop" lay on the tip of his tongue. After what had just occurred, he swallowed that word right back in.

SCHHWAFF!

Nie Tian's figure traveled like a flash, and he arrived at Yun Song's side in a split second.

BOOM!

Yun Song was thrown high into the air before he fell heavily onto

the ground.

In the next second, Nie Tian was standing where Yun Song had been, glaring aggressively at Yun Song, who was five meters away, and yelled, "Come on! Get up and continue!"

The moment Yun Song opened his mouth, he couldn't help but start to cough violently, with blood coming out of the corner of his mouth.

"Song'er!" screamed Yuan Qiuying and Yun Zhiguo, rushing forward to check Yun Song's injuries. They ran so quickly that they almost left a trail of flames behind them.

The numerous onlookers were also confused. Observing Nie Tian and the dispirited Yun Song from a distance, they continued to discuss the matter loudly.

"What!?"

"What just happened?"

"Am I seeing right? Why is the Nie clan kid standing, while the Yun clan kid is lying on the ground?"

"What exactly happened just now? I, I didn't see it."

"It's weird! So weird!"

However, the burly man from the Cloudsoaring sect caught every detail of the fight. He saw that after Nie Tian burst through the cluster of fireballs, he smashed into Yun Song's chest like a raging war chariot, knocking Yun Song right into the air.

After checking her son's wounds and finding that two of Yun Song's ribs were broken, Yuan Qiuying immediately went crazy. "Little bastard! How dare you injure my precious Song'er. I'm going to kill you right now!"

# Chapter 15: Interloper

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The burly man from the Cloudsoaring sect walked out from the clamoring crowd to stand next to Nie Tian. Brow slightly furrowed, he looked over at Yuan Qiuying and her husband and said, "Grown-ups shouldn't interfere in the scuffles of children, right?"

"Who are you?" Yuan Qiuying asked, growing increasingly angry. "How dare you lecture me?"

Yun Zhiguo took a close look at the burly man before his expression flickered subtly, and he subconsciously pulled on Yuan Qiuying's garment. "Li Fan?"

Li Fan gave a loud harrumph. "Indeed, it's me, Li Fan."

The anxious Nie Qian seemed to have heard of his name. The moment she learned the burly man in front of her was Li Fan from the Cloudsoaring sect, her eyes instantly glittered with joy.

"Mr. Li, please administer justice!" she pled.

Li Fan nodded and casually said, "You go ahead and take the boy home. I'd love to see if anyone dares to stop you!"

As domineering as Yuan Qiuying had always been in Black Cloud City, after hearing that this was Li Fan, she immediately cooled down.

She didn't have the courage to argue with someone like him. Instead, she glared at Nie Qian and Nie Tian with cold and resentful eyes.

"Little Tian, let's go." Nie Qian grabbed Nie Tian and quickly dragged him away from the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion, without giving him any opportunity to speak.

As he was being pulled away, Nie Tian kept turning his head back to look at Yuan Qiuying, Yun Zhiguo, and Li Fan.

"Auntie, who is that Li Fan?" he asked. "Why do that evil woman and all those people from the Yun clan fear him?"

"Li Fan is a disciple of the master of Cloudsoaring sect," Nie Qian explained quietly, "and is also a Greater Heaven stage Qi warrior. Even if the head of the Yun clan, Yun Meng, was here, he wouldn't dare to mess with him either."

"The Greater Heaven stage!" Nie Tian exclaimed in his heart.

Based on his knowledge, Yun Meng of the Yun clan had only just entered the Greater Heaven stage.

Having reached that stage, he had already become one of the most influential persons in Black Cloud City, which was why the Yun clan currently overshadowed the Nie clan in Black Cloud City.

As a Greater Heaven stage Qi warrior and a disciple of the master of the Cloudsoaring sect, Li Fan had a huge edge over Yun Meng in both status and strength.

Yun Zhiguo obviously didn't dare to let Yuan Qiuying do anything rash in face of such status and strength, so he could only give in.

"This time, it's really our good fortune that Mr. Li happened to be here. Otherwise, Yuan Qiuying would definitely not have let this go so easily. I know her too well." Nie Qian secretly rejoiced. "You naughty boy, always getting into trouble. If Yuan Qiuying wants to bitch about me, just ignore her and leave her be. Over the years, she has said every possible mean thing she could to me, but I'm still here, aren't I?"

"It's not like words can cause actual damage. Endure it momentarily and then it's over."

"You should focus your energy on cultivation. Only if you can break through into the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of fifteen, and become a real disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect, will you have a chance to seek justice for all the humiliation I've received."

"Auntie, please rest assured," Nie Tian replied firmly. "I won't let you down!"

Smiling, Nie Qian said, "Auntie has faith in you. However, the way you talked back to that slut Yuan Qiuying was actually quite

delightful to hear."

"Hahaha!" Nie Tian also burst into laughter.

Just as Nie Qian and Nie Tian were leaving, the little girl who had been standing by Li Fan caught up with them and stared at Nie Qian closely, her shrewd eyes glittering brightly. "Hi, what's your name?"

Having just defeated Yun Song, Nie Tian was in a good mood, so he answered casually with a smile on his face. "My name is Nie Tian."

The little girl with bright eyes and white teeth immediately offered her own name. "I'm Jiang Lingzhu. How did you beat that boy?"

Nie Qian's expression flickered. "Family name 'Jiang' and given name 'Lingzhu'..." she thought. Her eyes glittered strange light as she cast another glance at the little girl.

"You mean that little punk named Yun Song?" Chuckling, Nie Tian shook his head and said, "Nothing special. He's too weak. That's all."

"He's too weak?" Jiang Lingzhu also laughed. "Aren't you the weak one? His cultivation base is higher than yours by three full levels!"

"Who said the one with a higher cultivation base would surely win a battle?" At first, Nie Tian seemed surprised, but then turned his chin up arrogantly. "Ever since I was little, my opponents have always had higher cultivation levels, but eventually I knocked every single one of them to the ground."

"Wow, that's pretty incredible!" Jiang Lingzhu became even more interested. "So, you're definitely going to enter the Cloudsoaring sect, right?"

"Of course!" replied Nie Tian, full of confidence.

Jiang Lingzhu smiled. "Hahaha, hopefully you can be invited into the Cloudsoaring sect like Nie Xian."

"You bet I will." Nie Tian wasn't modest in the slightest.

"You're quite the character Nie Tian. I'll remember you." Jiang Lingzhu waved goodbye and skipped back toward Li Fan. As she did, she turned to look back at Nie Tian and said, "My name is Jiang Lingzhu. Keep that in mind. We'll meet again some time."

"Okay," Nie Tian said blankly.

"Jiang Lingzhu, the girl with Li Fan..." Nie Qian watched as the little girl left, her thoughts drifting.

"Auntie, shall we go?" Nie Tian said.



"Oh, right. Let's go." Nie Qian's wandering mind was suddenly pulled back to reality. She didn't say much to Nie Tian before taking his hand and leaving.

In the Nie clan, there were colorful lanterns and streamers everywhere, as well as happily chatting people.

When Nie Tian and Nie Qian returned from the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion, they found everyone in the clan smiling broadly.

On his way in, Nie Tian heard a variety of words of admiration regarding Nie Han from numerous members of the Nie clan.

"The eldest young master is back from the Cloudsoaring sect. He managed to reach the middle-stage of the Lesser Heaven stage after merely a couple of years of cultivation there. With the eldest young master in a stable position in the Cloudsoaring sect, our clan will definitely prosper."

"I've heard that Li Fan, a disciple of the master of the Cloudsoaring sect, came back with our eldest young master. Young master sure earned a lot of face because of that!"

"That means our eldest young master has been doing well in the Cloudsoaring sect."

"Of course!"

" ... "

When they finally found a moment of privacy, Nie Qian said, "Today, the whole clan will focus on Nie Han and Nie Xian, so it has nothing to do with us. I hope one day every member of the Nie clan will cheer for you, too."

"That day will come," Nie Tian said, full of aspiration.

"You go back. I have something to talk to your grandfather about." That said, Nie Qian headed off alone towards Nie Donghai's residence.

Since Nie Donghai had given up his position of clanmaster, he had already moved out of the main mansion of the Nie clan, and was now living in an unimpressive stone house.

When she arrived, Nie Qian saw Nie Donghai standing by the window, facing the direction of the main mansion, lost in his thoughts.

Numerous elders of the Nie clan were gathered in the mansion, and joyful laughter rang out from their direction.

It wasn't hard for Nie Qian to imagine the scene of the crowd of clan members flattering Nie Beichuan, Nie Han, and Nie Xian in the main mansion at this moment.

The joy and laughter in the mansion had nothing to do with Nie Donghai and Nie Qian. Ever since Nie Donghai had moved out of the mansion, other clan members rarely paid him visits.

"Father, Nie Tian and I ran into Yuan Qiuying at the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion just now," Nie Qian said softly.

Nie Donghai immediately turned around and inquired with a grim face, "What? You had to endure that vile woman's verbal insults again?"

"No." Nie Qian shook her head. "Little Tian talked back for me, and he also taught Yuan Qiuying's son a lesson."

Nie Donghai was shocked, "That kid named Yun Song? His cultivation talent is even better than Nie Hong's, which I heard has reached the seventh level of Qi Refining. How was Nie Tian capable of teaching him a lesson?"

Nie Qian told the whole story to Nie Donghai, not holding back a single detail.

Then she said worriedly, "That woman has never been kind. She didn't dare to lose control in front of Li Fan, but I'm worried that after Li Fan is gone, she won't let this go so easily and will seek revenge. Times have changed. You're no longer head of the Nie clan. If she were to cause trouble, I'm afraid..."

"You just keep an eye on Nie Tian," he replied calmly. "Don't take

him out of the Nie clan for the time being. As long as he is on Nie clan property, the Yun clan won't dare to make a move."

"I'm sorry," Nie Qian apologized in a low voice. "I failed to hold Little Tian back."

"Some things are unavoidable. You shouldn't blame yourself." Nie Donghai sighed.

Meanwhile....

Nie Tian had cast all the clamor out of his head. The moment he got back to his room, he started to practice cultivation, a sense of urgency rising up in his heart.

He could still remember a strange force rising from his body during his last battle with Nie Hong, which had resulted in himself suffering from a high fever.

This time, he beat Yun Song with the help of that same unknown force. So with that in mind, he secretly observed the occurrences in his body while cultivating.

After an unknown period of time, he gradually felt a burning sensation on the left side of his waist.

Worried it was a sign of another high fever, he instantly focused his attention on the left side of his waist.

"Yee?!"

He suddenly saw the source of the heat wasn't from his body, but instead it was from the piece of animal bone he had obtained from the lot-drawing convention.

# Chapter 16: The Fire-Consuming Animal Bone

---

Nie Tian had obtained that piece of animal bone at the lot-drawing convention when he was one.

Ever since he chose it, his grandfather and aunt had hoped that one day his spiritual energy would resonate with that piece of animal bone.

Unfortunately, there hadn't been any sort of interaction between him and the bone till now, and he had already given up.

Yet he always had the animal bone with him. Sometimes, deep into the night, he would take it out and fiddle with it, hoping to sense any miracles that were hidden within.

Over the years, nothing seemed have happened to the bone.

However, something was different today.

He took a closer look at it, and saw the animal bone seemed to be emanating rays of red light.

His waist, where the animal bone was located, started to feel an increasingly strong burning sensation. As the red light flickered, the heat grew more and more unbearable.

"Strange..."

Nie Tian's face was full of confusion as he put the animal bone in his palm and began to probe it with his inner spiritual power.

As he examined it with his heart and awareness, he saw numerous fragmented red fireballs, which radiated reddish-orange flames inside the animal bone. It seemed as if it were burning on the inside.

His expression flickered. "Reddish-orange flames! When I was fighting Yun Song, didn't he condense fireballs of the same color?"

By this point, he had temporarily retracted his awareness from the animal bone and refocused on the details of the fight between him and Yun Song.

It suddenly came to him that when he broke through those reddish-orange fireballs, flames had exploded out of most of them.

However, those which hit the location of the animal bone, didn't explode at all.

From the look of it, part of the flames were permanently stuck there...

"Could it be that those reddish-orange flames were absorbed by the animal bone?" Nie Tian gradually had a clearer grasp of what happened.

As he was speculating, the animal bone grew more and more scalding hot, and changed from its original dark-brown color to a bright red. The entire bone was now glowing like a piece of hot steel.

The unusually high temperature hurt his palm, forcing him to stand up and drop the animal bone onto the stone table.

As he looked on with wide eyes, he realized that the bone was apparently being forged, with bright flames flashing inside every now and then.

The miraculous state didn't last long. A moment later, the animal bone once again turned dim and lifeless, as if the flame contained inside it had run out.

Only after it cooled down, did Nie Tian dare to reach out his hand and touch it with his finger.

He shut his eyes to probe it closely, but he could only perceive a few remaining flames flickering inside.

A while later, the those few flames also disappeared, and the animal bone returned to its normal color, as if nothing had happened at all.

Nie Tian kept fiddling with it for a while in hope of grasping its secrets, but he found nothing.



No new changes occurred with the bone after quite some time, so he reluctantly gave up and put it away.

However, after that incident, he generally paid much closer attention to it.

In the following days, Nie Tian was strictly forbidden to leave the Nie clan because Nie Donghai had found several unfamiliar Qi warriors wandering around their household.

Nie Donghai was sure that those unidentified Qi warriors were either sent there by the Yun clan or guest elders who answered to Yuan Qiuying.

Even the Yun and Yuan clan didn't dare to openly lay their murderous hands on Nie Tian in Black Cloud City.

All they could do was to find some new faces to do their job, then wash themselves of the evidence by commanding those men to leave Black Cloud City for good afterwards.

In order to keep Nie Tian out of danger, Nie Qian watched his back all day long and prohibited him from taking even one step out of the Nie clan.

As the result, Nie Tian didn't leave the Nie clan for the following three months. During this period, he concentrated on practicing the Qi Refining Incantation, hoping to make further

improvements in a short time.

Three months later, those strangers gradually retreated from the Nie clan after failing to find any opportunity to make a move.

"I'm so exhausted." Nie Qian's face was full of fatigue as she walked into Nie Tian's room and casually threw a cloth bag on the table. "After three days of hard work, I've finally finished a thorough accounting of the flamecloud gems the clan has mined over the past few months, and presented most of them to the Cloudsoaring sect as tribute. Another large portion of the remaining flamecloud gems was shipped to the clan storeroom, so I only got this many for myself."

Nie Tian returned to reality from his cultivation as the red light of the sun setting shone into the room through the opened door. "Are those flamecloud gems?" Nie Tian curiously looked at the handful of gems that rolled out of the cloth bag.

"Yeah, these are flamecloud gems, spiritual materials of the fourth Elementary level." Nie Qian picked up a fist-sized gem and tossed it to Nie Tian. "Spiritual materials are special objects used to refine spiritual tools or form spiritual formations. Qi warriors start to work with them when their cultivation base reaches one of the three Heaven stages. Come, have a look."

Nie Tian extended his hand and caught the flamecloud gem with great precision, then looked down to study it closely.

The flamecloud gem was the size of a fist, with a dark-red luster

on the outside, and red, cloud-like vein patterns running through it. Apparently, it contained fire-attributed power.

Nie Tian examined it for a while, then as an idea suddenly struck him, he took out the animal bone.

While Nie Qian watched, he slowly moved the flamecloud gem closer to the animal bone, attempting to channel the flame power contained in the flamecloud gem towards the animal bone.

Last time, when the flame power of Yun Song's fireballs entered the animal bone, it later caused a miraculous change to the bone. He kept that in mind.

He wanted to see if the bone could continue to absorb the flame power like last time.

BZZZ BZZZ!

When the animal bone touched the flamecloud gem, sparks immediately erupted out from the point of contact, and the dark-brown bone turned the same red color as the flamecloud gem.

Nie Tian opened his eyes wide as he sensed rays of flame power flowing from the flamecloud gem into the animal bone.

Clusters of the red clouds in the flamecloud gem vanished at a speed visible to the naked eye.

"Eee?!"

Nie Qian also perceived the anomaly and hurried over to Nie Tian's side, observing the animal bone with great curiosity.

All the red clouds in the flamecloud gem disappeared in a short period of time.

She knew very well that those small clusters of red clouds were the flame power embodied in the flamecloud gem.

KAAA! KAAA!

After its red clouds completely vanished, the fist-sized flamecloud gem suddenly cracked open.

As it split into smaller flamecloud gems, the pieces went from being dark red to a lifeless pale white, as if they had become normal stones.

On the other hand, the dark-brown animal bone gradually turned bright red, like a heated piece of steel ready to be forged. It grew so scalding hot that Nie Tian quickly let go of it.

"Little Tian, you..." Nie Qian burst into ecstasy, as her bright eyes glittered with excitement. "Have you started to resonate with the spiritual power of the animal bone? Is your cultivation attribute

fire?"

She had always been anxious about the fact that Nie Tian had neither showed any kind of unique cultivation attribute, nor resonated with the animal bone.

Seeing the bone turning completely red today made her think that Nie Tian had caused it, and thus she instantly became overjoyed.

"It has nothing to do with me." Nie Tian shook his head with a bitter smile. "If it was I who caused the bone to change and my inner spiritual power had the fire attribute, I should have been able to hold on to it."

"Then..." Nie Qian asked after being disappointed. "What was that?"

"It was the flamecloud gem that caused the animal bone to change." Nie Tian explained the details of the unusual changes in the animal bone the night after his fight with Yun Song and said, "This animal bone appears to be able to absorb power of fire. I wasn't so sure before, but after this experiment, with the flamecloud gem's flame power drained by the animal bone, I am quite certain of it."

As they spoke, the bright, fiery animal bone lost its energy and once again turned dark-brown.

"Why did it change back again?" Nie Qian asked curiously.

Nie Tian said, "When it finishes absorbing the fire energy it will regain its original look. It needs to continue to consume more fire energy in order to change again."

"Let me see." Nie Qian grew more interested.

She picked up the cloth bag of flamecloud gems from the table, took out a bigger flamecloud gem, and passed it to Nie Tian. "Try again."

"OK." Nie Tian did as she said and made another attempt.

BZZZ BZZZ!

The moment the animal bone touched the flamecloud gem, sparks erupted out, and the bone turned bright and red.

Once more, in front of Nie Tian and Nie Qian's eyes, the larger flamecloud gem had its flame power rapidly drained by the animal bone, before it cracked open.

Dots of fiery light, like tiny red stars, flashed out of the animal bone one after another.

Nie Qian had been eager to touch it. She gradually reached out her hand and gently touched the animal bone with her translucent

white fingertip, wishing to discover the secrets within.

"Ouch!" The moment Nie Qian made contact with the bone, she let out a shout and retracted her hand in a flash.

Her finger was unexpectedly burnt in that split second.

By the time she gathered her water-attributed spiritual power and tried to touch the animal bone again, it had returned to its normal state and became ordinary again.

"One more time!" Her curiosity was aroused, so she took out another flamecloud gem and placed it on the animal bone. The animal bone once again turned red.

This time, she condensed her water-attributed spiritual power onto her fingertip and touched it again.

PTSSS! PTSSS!

Strands of steam rose from the contact point between her fingertip and the animal bone. She only managed to hold on for three seconds before she no longer could bear the burning temperature of the bone, and retracted her hand.

"Come on!" Nie Qian tried again and again. One by one, all of the flamecloud gems cracked after their flame power was drained by the animal bone.

Every time, she couldn't bear to press her finger on the bone for more than a few seconds. She always had to retract her hand, just as her spiritual sense permeated the animal bone.

Before long, all of her flamecloud gems had turned into a pile of pale-white gravel.

Nie Qian's forehead was covered in sweat as she looked at the animal bone, somewhat disheartened. She shook her head and sighed, "This thing is a bit weird."

Perhaps, because it had absorbed a vast amount of fire energy, the animal bone didn't immediately return to normal after the last flamecloud gem cracked. Instead, it remained bright and red, like a piece of steel ready to be hammered.

"Let me have a try." Nie Tian extended his hand towards the animal bone abruptly.

"Don't! It's too hot! You'll get burnt!" Nie Qian yelled, and tried to stop him.

After numerous attempts, she was absolutely certain that the more flame power the animal bone absorbed, the hotter it got. Therefore, after the first few attempts, she could no longer bear the increasing heat, even though she had condensed a huge amount of water spiritual power on her fingertip.



At this moment, the animal bone must be at its hottest, after absorbing flame power of all the flamecloud gems, so Nie Tian was asking for trouble by touching it.

However, Nie Tian reached out his hand faster than she thought.

By the time the warning came out of her mouth, Nie Tian's finger had already reached the animal bone.

"Stop!" She cried out loud.

Yet, Nie Tian didn't shriek and retract his hand as she expected.

Surprisingly, Nie Tian had his finger on the animal bone, with absolutely no sign of pain. Instead, his eyes became bright, as if he had made a shocking discovery.

# Chapter 17: A Drop Of Blood

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Normally, if Nie Qian couldn't bear the heat, Nie Tian shouldn't be able to endure it either.

Moreover, as Nie Tian said himself, his spiritual power didn't resonate with the animal bone. Earlier, when the temperature of the animal bone gradually rose, Nie Tian did let go of it, which meant Nie Tian didn't have a way to endure such a high temperature.

But now, Nie Tian dared to touch it with his hand, even after the animal bone had absorbed so much flame power and its temperature had become so unbearably high that even Nie Qian couldn't stand it.

That, in and of itself, was already a surprise to her.

But more surprisingly, by this point Nie Tian's finger had already been pressed against the animal bone, not moving a bit.

For the first time, Nie Qian felt she that she didn't understand her nephew at all.

PTSSS! PTSSS!

Nie Qian watched closely as the contact point between Nie Tian's finger and the animal bone began giving off sparks of fire.

In the meantime, Nie Tian's mind had drifted away, and his eyes glittered with a peculiar light.

"Has he found something?" Nie Qian murmured and then quickly shut up, fearing that she would disrupt Nie Tian.

Nie Tian sensed little drops of fire, like tiny red stars, floating about in the animal bone, voluntarily moving and gathering at a point inside the animal bone.

The red spot grew larger and larger. Inside of it, strands of peculiar light mingled and flashed, as it grew even more mysterious.

He concentrated all his spiritual sense and tried to discover its secret.

BOOM!

All of a sudden, his mind shook violently, and he found himself in a grotesque and variegated world.

The entire world was covered in a reddish color; innumerable sparks of flame twinkled and strands of red light interweaved. They wriggled like snakes and kept forming different incredible patterns by the second.

Inside those sparks of flame and ever changing formations of red light, there seemingly lay the true essence of the flame power.

His spiritual awareness seemed to be swimming in a mysterious sea of fire, exploring the profound truths and mysteries that lay within.

He completely immersed himself into it.

After an unknown period of time, he felt as if he himself had turned into a fire spirit and soared across an unknown fiery heaven and earth.

Gradually, the bright red animal bone turned dark and lifeless again.

BANG!

The mysterious world of fire suddenly collapsed and exploded, causing millions of fiery sparks and strands of red light to fly off in every direction.

Nie Tian's spiritual awareness was then violently pulled away from the miraculous land and back into the animal bone.

He saw a drop of crimson blood inside the animal bone, which then split into numerous tiny flames that dispersed into every corner of the animal bone.

Moments later, those tiny flames died out, one after another, and

before long, the animal bone returned normal.

Nie Tian gradually retracted his spiritual sense and refocused on the rough texture where his finger met the animal bone.

HUFF!

He exhaled deeply, and as he pulled his finger from the animal bone, he kept his eyes fixed on it and said, "A drop of blood..."

After restraining herself for so long, Nie Qian immediately asked, "What happened?! What was going on? What did you do? How could you have withstood the high temperature of the bone?" She popped out a series of questions.

"I'm not quite sure." Nie Tian said as his mind became lucid and clear again. "I don't know why, but I just felt that I should touch the animal bone. When I touched it, I wasn't hurt by the scalding heat, instead... I found something strange inside of it."

"What do you mean?!" Nie Qian was absolutely intrigued.

"The animal bone might have absorbed enough flame power, thus innumerable fragments of flame gathered inside of it, forming what seemed to be a small drop of blood. That drop of blood itself was like a mysterious universe of fire. Then my mind spun as I seemed to enter that bizarre world of fire, and even move about inside of it.

"However, it seemed to me that that drop of blood was not completely formed.

"After a while, when the animal bone returned to normal, the drop of blood unexpectedly split into numerous little flames again, which disappeared into the bone.

"I have a feeling that the animal bone... hasn't consumed enough flame power to complete the condensation of that drop of blood. Far from it in fact."

"A drop of blood?" Nie Qian was full of questions. "How could there be a drop of blood inside the animal bone? And what's more, the drop hasn't been completely formed? This is too odd."

Nie Tian spread his hands and said, "I don't know what happened exactly either."

Nie Qian pondered for a moment before she said, "I've run out of flamecloud gems, but your grandfather should still have some. Wait here. I'll go find your grandfather right now!"

With these words Nie Qian left the room.

A while later, Nie Donghai entered the room together with Nie Qian, carrying an even larger cloth bag full of flamecloud gems. He handed the bag over to Nie Tian, and said, "This is my entire collection of flamecloud gems."

Flamecloud gems were low-tier spiritual materials, and after years of mining, the Nie clan naturally had significant caches built up.

However, only those who had inner attributes of fire would be able to cultivate using the help of flamecloud gems. Neither Nie Donghai nor Nie Qian had fire attributes, therefore they didn't save up a huge reserve.

Nie Qian's eyes glowed as she said, "Try again."

"Sure!" Nie Tian nodded his head.

Then, one after another, he channeled the flame power of the flamecloud gems into the piece of animal bone.

The animal bone soon turned thoroughly red, with its internal spots of flame visible to the naked eye.

After the bone absorbed the spiritual flame power from several flamecloud gems, and was burning hot, Nie Donghai reached out his hand and tried touching it. "Let me see!"

ZZZZZLA!

A streak of flame shot out of the animal bone. Nie Donghai screamed in pain and retracted his hand with an embarrassed look on his face.

Even for him, the temperature of the animal bone was too high to endure, hence he had to let go of it.

Completely astonished, he asked, "Did you say just now that Nie Tian could touch it?"

Nie Qian nodded. "Yes."

"Nie Tian, be careful and show me," Nie Donghai said with a serious expression.

"Wait a moment." Nie Tian briefly shook his head and said. "It seems that we still need to wait. Only when the tiny flames inside the bone start to converge, will I be able to touch it."

"Let it absorb more fire energy from the flamecloud gems then!" Nie Donghai instructed.

"Sure." One by one, Nie Tian took the flamecloud gems out of the cloth bag and lay them next to the animal bone, channeling flame power of the flamecloud gems into the bone.

KAH CHA!

Every one of the flamecloud gems, after being drained of flame power, cracked and turned into pale-white normal stones.



Nie Donghai's eyes glittered as he keenly watched the animal bone and glanced at Nie Tian from time to time, anticipation written across his face.

He had always wanted to determine whether or not there was a unique cultivation attribute hidden in Nie Tian, and he also secretly prayed that Nie Tian would reveal an amazing cultivation talent one day.

In his opinion, that piece of animal bone could be the breakthrough point.

At this point, Nie Tian noticed that the tiny flames inside the bone were once again starting to gather together at a single point. "It's ready!"

He reached out his hand without any hesitation, and pressed his fingertip on the animal bone.

In a split second, it appeared that his spiritual sense had been sucked into the animal bone.

He sensed hundreds of sparkling flames, like tiny burning stars, racing to gather together.

In the blink of an eye, a drop of blood was formed again, and his spiritual awareness suddenly re-entered the unknown fiery dimension.

He immediately fell into a trance, however, his eyes glittered.

"He was like this before!" Nie Qian said in a low voice.

Nie Donghai's expression flickered, and his breaths grew increasingly rapid, as he appeared to be trying to suppress the excitement in his heart.

Nie Tian's spiritual sense started to roam about in that drop of blood, probing that world of ever twisting and changing formations of red light.

This time, he felt as though the mysterious world was vaster than before; the floating flames and interweaving red lights also became clearer and easier to catch.

It appeared that the mysterious, unknown space was reaching its complete form, after absorbing enough flame power.

From the ever moving bright spots and red strands, he vaguely discovered a mysterious fire incantation, the profound true essence of flame power.

However, even though it had absorbed fire energy from all their flamecloud gems, the mysterious space still wasn't in its complete form.

Hence, when he tried to comprehend its secrets, he could sense that there were still things missing.

After a while, the mysterious world of fire once again collapsed, and his spiritual sense returned to his body.

Once more, he witnessed the drop of blood separate into numerous tiny flames, which gradually vanished into the animal bone, while the animal bone slowly regained its original state.

"How did it go?" Nie Donghai asked with a serious look.

Nie Tian concentrated his mind and deliberated over his choice of words, then said, "That drop of blood needs more flame power to fully form. I felt that there is either a mysterious incantation of fire was hidden in the drop of blood, or a secret regarding the power of flame.

"Excellent!" Nie Donghai was full of excitement. "I'll get you more flamecloud gems! During this time, you must pay close attention to the changes in the animal bone, and carefully memorize any anomaly!"

"I understand," Nie Tian said.

# Chapter 18: A Bottomless Pit

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Nie Donghai was true to his word.

In the following days, he continued to give flamecloud gems to Nie Tian so that his animal bone could absorb their flame power.

Nie Qian did exactly the same.

However, the animal bone was like a bottomless pit; after absorbing the power of flame from numerous flamecloud gems, it still hadn't completely formed that drop of blood.

Later on, Nie Tian discovered that the number of flamecloud gems his grandfather and aunt brought was growing fewer and fewer.

Sometimes, Nie Qian would come to his room, leave two or three flamecloud gems, and immediately rush out, seemingly disturbed, apparently afraid that Nie Tian would find out something was wrong.

Nie Tian was no fool. He had noticed much earlier that the jewelry Nie Qian wore had begun to disappear one after another.

As time went by, Nie Donghai stopped showing up. Only Nie Qian would occasionally come over and drop off one or two flamecloud gems, then look at the animal bone with her eyes full of expectation, before leaving with a grim look on her face.

Two young girls of the Nie clan were talking to each other as they passed by Nie Tian's room. Given the volumes of their voices, it was hard to say whether or not they intended for Nie Tian to hear them.

"I heard that eldest aunt had a big fight with uncle Nie Ping, who's in charge of the storehouse. Eldest aunt claimed that Nie Ping intentionally ripped her off, and the jewelry she traded in were well worth three flamecloud gems, while uncle Nie Ping only gave her one in exchange."

"Second grandfather is our current clanmaster. Uncle Nie Ping became supervisor of the storehouse after second grandfather assumed his position. Uncle Nie Ping only reports to second grandfather, so he surely won't bother to consider eldest aunt's feelings."

"I don't know what's going on. It seems eldest grandfather and eldest aunt have taken all their valuables to the storehouse and traded them for flamecloud gems."

"Exactly, eldest grandfather even traded in the medicinal pills for his injuries. God knows what is wrong with him."

"It's the same with eldest aunt. She doesn't have a single presentable piece of jewelery on her now."

"... "

Inside the room, Nie Tian clearly overheard their conversations. He had originally been concentrated on his cultivation, but the girls' words distracted and upset him, and his little face filled with a sullenness somewhat inappropriate for a child his age.

Disturbed by this thought, he subconsciously reached for the animal bone and took it out of the pocket on his waist. He stared at it and suddenly found it incomparably troublesome. "Are grandfather and aunt trading in all their assets to get me more flamecloud gems?"

In that exact same moment, Nie Qian's voice sounded from outside the room. "Little Tian!"

She shoved the door open, her eyes filled with exhaustion. It appeared as if she was completely drained mentally because of the events of the past days.

"Here you go." Arriving by Nie Tian's side, she casually tossed a flamecloud gem over, which landed at Nie Tian's side. Staring in anticipation at the animal bone, she said, "Quickly, let the animal bone absorb its flame power."

"There's no need." Nie Tian shook his head. "In my opinion, this animal bone is a bottomless pit. No amount of flamecloud gems will be enough to fill it."

Nie Qian put on a straight face and said angrily, "Are you telling me that you plan on giving up like this? Do you have any idea what

your grandfather has gone through to get you these flamecloud gems?"

"I know." Nie Tian's eyes were filled with agony. "I also know that you have sold your valuable jewelery at low prices to get me more flamecloud gems."

Nie Qian was startled. She immediately realized that her nephew had grown up, and he had already perceived what was going on from the trivial clues he had found.

She pondered the matter for a moment and then reassuringly said, "Money and valuables are merely possessions. As long as you can reach the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of fifteen, and become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect, all of our investment will be well paid off."

With these words, her expression grew grim again and said, "I'm afraid your grandfather's injuries won't get better. His road of cultivation is reaching its end."

"As for me, my cultivation talent has been poor since I was child. I've merely reached the early-stage of Lesser Heaven, which is nothing compared to your mother's achievement. Back then, if I had managed to reach the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of fifteen and became a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect, the Yun clan definitely wouldn't have dared to treat me like they did, despite the fact that our clan was weak!

"I don't want you to end up like me! You are already eleven years

old, which means you only have four years left. You have to enter the ninth level of Qi Refining in four years!

"Your current cultivation level is too low. That animal bone might be your only chance at a breakthrough!

"So no matter what, you must persist and see if the animal bone can bring you a miracle! You are the last hope for your grandfather and I. Don't act like a child and waste your grandfather's and my efforts!" Nie Qian's lecture was delivered with great authority.

Nie Tian remained silent as he listened closely. He waited for Nie Qian to finish, then said, "I understand. I won't fail you."

With these words, he placed the flamecloud gem onto the animal bone.

After a few breaths worth of time, the flamecloud gem was drained of flame power and turned into gravel.

Perhaps the flame power in the flamecloud gems was too sparse, and thus the flames in the animal bone showed no sign of gathering.

Nie Tian and Nie Qian stared at the animal bone from beginning till end. Seeing the animal bone become dark and lifeless again, they were full of disappointment.

"Don't be depressed, I'll think of something else." Nie Qian



suppressed her disappointment with great effort, and said. "I'll go to the mines tomorrow. There are plenty of flamecloud gems waiting to be mined. If I work harder and longer, I can surely bring you more flamecloud gems!"

Nie Tian bounced up and said. "I'll go with you!"

"No!" Nie Qian replied forcefully. "Due to our excessive mining of flamecloud gems, collapses happen in the mines from time to time. It's too dangerous. You absolutely can't go!"

Nie Tian's voice was full of certainty as he said, "I believe that even with several dozen more flamecloud gems, the animal bone won't necessarily be filled. Only if I bring the animal bone with me and let it absorb from those unmined flamecloud gems, would we have the chance to fill it up, and therefore completely form the blood drop."

"Let the animal bone absorb directly from the raw ore?" Nie Qian was surprised by his idea.

She also thought Nie Tian's suggestion made sense. It wasn't easy to mine the numerous flamecloud gems.

Even if she worked there, she wouldn't be able to mine a large amount of flamecloud gems in a short period of time. Moreover, she would have to keep record of the mined flamecloud gems when she left the mines. A portion of them would go to the Cloudsoaring sect; a portion of them would go to the Nie clan's storehouse; the portion she could actually leave with would be only about twenty

percent.

She had already calculated that to get several dozen flamecloud gems, she probably would have to spend more than half a year in the mines.

On the other hand, Nie Tian was already eleven, so time was what he lacked the most.

"Let me go," Nie Tian pleaded. "I can't just sit around and wait. I need to fight for myself. Going to the mines would also be a type of training for me."

Nie Qian considered carefully, before she finally nodded her head. "Remember. When we are out of Black Cloud City, you must follow my orders, and never act without my permission!

"Of course! Of course!" Nie Tian immediately promised.

Having been strictly confined to the Nie clan for months, he had been bored to death long ago. Now that the strangers who had lingered around the Nie clan had long since disappeared, he wanted to find an opportunity himself and go out.

Nie Qian said, "Tomorrow morning, I'll take you out of town!"

"Thank you, aunt!" Nie Tian rejoiced.

The next morning before dawn, Nie Tian was already standing at the gate when Nie Qian came.

At dawn, the two of them quietly left Black Cloud City, and marched towards Cloudsoaring Mountain.

Inside the Yun clan.

Yuan Qiuying and Yun Song finished their breakfast. They were rinsing their mouths when a man entered the room and softly said, "Mistress, Nie Qian and the little punk Nie Tian left Black Cloud City this morning and headed towards Cloudsoaring Mountain."

"The turtle has finally come out of its shell!" Yuan Qiuying's expression flickered as she gritted her teeth and said viciously. "That bitch and that fatherless and motherless little bastard, I'll see if they can break free from my grasp this time!"

She had never let go of her grudge against Nie Qian and Nie Tian.

Although she had recently called off the guest elders she sent to the Nie clan, she had still been secretly watching the gates of Black Cloud City.

She knew that Nie Qian and Nie Tian would eventually run out of patience and have to get out of the city.

Yuan Qiuying said ferociously, "They dared to leave Black Cloud City? The heavens must be helping me. I would have had to think

twice before making a move inside the city. Now that they are out of the city, they shall never go back alive!

"That bitch must have gone to the Nie clan's mines in Cloudsoaring Mountain! [Don't beat the grass and scare the snake](#), so don't make a move on their way to the mines. She will undoubtedly pay extra attention on their way to the mines. You just wait for them to come out of the mines and kill them on their way back to the city!"

beat the grass and scare the snake — it's a Chinese idiom which means to act rashly and alert the enemy

"Understood, Mistress. I promise they won't make it back to Black Cloud City alive!"

"Alright. Make it clean and leave no traces. After it's done, order those guys to leave Black Cloud City and never return, so as to avoid the Cloudsoaring sect from getting any information that can be used against us."

"I understand."

## Chapter 19: Mine #73

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Cloudsoaring Mountain was to the southeast of Black Cloud City. People called it Cloudsoaring Mountain, but what they were actually referring to was the mountain range formed by several mountains of different heights.

The highest peak, Cloudsoaring Peak, was thousands of meters high, reaching into the clouds, with spiritual Qi swirling around it.

The other surrounding peaks were completely dwarfed by it.

The spiritual energy surrounding Cloudsoaring Mountain was quite rich and thick, thus every mountain peak in it had their own unique features.

Some mountain peaks were seeded with a large number of spirit plants and guarded by disciples of the Cloudsoaring sect.

Inside of other mountain peaks, numerous high-level spiritual materials were hidden away. These mountain peaks were also managed and mined by disciples of the Cloudsoaring sect.

The mountain peak in which the Nie clan mined flamecloud gems was actually the least impressive among all the smaller mountain peaks.

It was late in the afternoon when Nie Tian and Nie Qian finally arrived at that very mountain peak.

At the mouth of the mountain mine, Nie Xiang, a keeper of the Nie clan, looked at Nie Qian and the child with her, suspicions bubbling up in his mind. "Eldest sister, it's not yet time to audit the flamecloud gems again. Why are you here?"

Nie Qian answered with a smile, "I'm not here to audit the flamecloud gems. I've brought my nephew here to help him gain experience."

"Come to the mine to help him gain experience?!" Nie Xiang looked stunned, and even more confused than before.

The mine wasn't safe, therefore over the years, only the children who had committed serious violations of clan rules would be sent there to the mine.

Hence, Nie Xiang was deeply confused by Nie Qian, who claimed to have brought Nie Tian there to help him gain experience.

Nie Qian didn't give a more detailed explanation. After greeting Nie Xiang, she went straight into the mine, holding Nie Tian's hand.

Nie Xiang immediately blurted out some warnings. "Eldest sister, the kid... he's too young. If something happens to him in the mine, I can't accept responsibility."

"That's fine," Nie Qian declared. "If something bad happens to

him, I'll take full responsibility."

Upon hearing her words, Nie Xiang didn't say another word and allowed Nie Tian and Nie Qian to enter the mine.

Inside the mine, Nie Tian glanced around curiously as they walked along. "Flamecloud gems are mined here?"

"In the depths of the mine they are." Nie Qian took a deep breath, her eyes filled with worry. "Remember, you have to follow my instructions and walk alongside me at all times. Due to overmining, many areas of the mine has become almost completely hollowed out, although you can't tell by looking at them. Every now and then, those areas collapse when earthquakes strike. I know which areas are safe and which are dangerous. You must never leave my side."

Nie Tian looked up at the rhombus-shaped rocks that hung five or six meters above. Then he started to nod vigorously.

Each of those rocks weighed more than five hundred kilograms; if they fell, he would be instantly reduced to a meat patty.

"Follow me." Nie Qian grabbed him by the arm and walked down the endless, dim stone path.

Nie Tian followed Nie Qian wordlessly, gazing around with great curiosity. He also walked with more care and caution.

As they walked deeper, a lot of extended members of the Nie clan, together with hired laborers, greeted Nie Qian respectfully the moment they saw her.

"Good day, eldest sister. What brought you here?"

"Be careful, eldest sister. It's not safe in there. Some areas collapsed just a couple of days ago."

"Greetings, eldest sister."

Nie Qian nodded and smiled back to every one of them. She also urged them to be extra cautious and prevent accidents by all means.

Nie Tian could see those who worked in the mine paid heartfelt respect to Nie Qian.

"These people, who mine flamecloud gems in the mine, live hard lives. Every and each one of them knew what they were facing when they came in." Nie Qian sighed briefly when she saw no one was around. "Little Tian, if you fail to be accepted by the Cloudsoaring sect when you are fifteen, you will probably be sent to this place by your second grandfather to mine flamecloud gems."

"Aren't only the extended members of the Nie clan supposed to be sent here?" Nie Tian asked.



"That used to be the case, but it might change." Nie Qian shook her head, her eyes somewhat dim. "In the mine, the mortality rate is rather high. People die here. The main mission of the Nie clan is to mine flamecloud gems for the Cloudsoaring sect. No other matter in the clan is more important.

"In recent years, flamecloud gems closer to the surface began to run out, so we had no other choice but to dig deeper, which made it more and more dangerous.

"All the elders of the extended families of the clan have used every possible method to avoid having their descendants sent to the mine.

"However, this place is the foundation of the Nie clan. People fear death. Without the supervision of our clan members, those laborers we have hired won't be willing to mine at such a depth. Meanwhile, we have to pay sufficient amounts of flamecloud gems as annual tributes to the Cloudsoaring sect. Once we fall short, the Cloudsoaring sect will probably stop caring about our clan.

"The truth is, without the Cloudsoaring sect's protection, it will be extremely difficult for our clan to maintain our foothold in Black Cloud City.

"Therefore, this mine is of the utmost importance to our clan. Around the clock, clan members have been appointed here for supervision purposes. Now that your second grandfather has come to power, he has promised to make changes, so it is very possible that members of direct families also be assigned here."

With these words, Nie Qian paused for a second, and then said profoundly, "Because your grandfather has been losing power and influence in the clan for a long time, I was appointed to manage the mine before he retired. Now we are even weaker. If you can't make yourself a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect, we definitely won't be able to escape the destiny of being assigned here."

Nie Tian bowed his head and reflected on what she said. Soon after, he nodded and said, "I understand."

"Let's go." Nie Qian kept marching deeper.

After a while, Nie Tian discovered that the stone path leading into the belly of the mountain became increasingly narrow; the distance between his head and the ceiling of the tunnel was getting shorter and shorter.

He also noticed the number of laborers grew fewer as he went further down, and those laborers appeared to be skinnier and more spiritless.

A dark-skinned, skinny, middle-aged man suddenly showed up at an intersection of stone tunnels and warned, "Eldest sister, it's dangerous up ahead. You'd better not go any further. Merely eight days ago, Mine #73 witnessed a collapse, and two people were killed. We've only just cleared the rubble."

Nie Qian immediately stopped. She hesitated for a moment and said with a serious face, "Thank you for the warning. We'll take a

brief look and come back soon."

"If so, you must be absolutely careful. I... I'll leave you be." The man's voice was full of fear.

Nie Qian nodded. "Sure, please go ahead with your work." The dark-skinned, skinny man vanished.

Nie Qian fell into silence for a while, and continued, "The further inside, the higher the mortality rate. Hence, every laborer who works here seems lifeless, because they never know which day will be their last. They are all unfortunate people from Black Cloud City. In order to earn a living for their wives and children inside the city, they are willing to take the risk to come here."

"Qi warriors of the Cloudsoaring sect all have extraordinary abilities," Nie Tian said. "Let's say they were in here. Even if it collapsed, they wouldn't be hurt, right?"

Nie Qian gently nodded, and patiently said, "Cultivating to the Heaven stage would allow a person to do as he wishes inside the mine, absolutely fearless of sudden cave-ins. However, why would Qi warriors of the Heaven realm waste time to come here for flamecloud gems that are only an elementary grade four material?"

"Those powerful Qi warriors are the most heartless!"

"The Nie clan is nothing in their eyes. They would never care about a few random lives, let alone the lives of the unfortunate

laborers the Nie clan has hired!

"Real Qi warriors are high above the masses. Clans like ours can only serve them.

"In the same way, mortals of the Black Cloud City also serve our clan. This world is cruel by nature. Neither you nor I can change it. There is only one way to be above others, one way to be free from being enslaved.

"And that is to become one of them!" Nie Qian said.

Nie Tian nodded forcefully with a tight face. "I promise I'll become a powerful Qi warrior!"

Nie Qian also grew determined. "Good! Let's go to the bottom of Mine #73!"

Before long, Nie Tian, under her lead, arrived in a vast area at the bottom of the mine.

The moment he went in, he noticed there were red spots on the walls glittering faintly with red light.

"Flamecloud gems!" Nie Tian suddenly felt enlivened.

Nie Qian urged in a loud voice. "This place is dangerous. Don't waste time. Hurry and absorb the flame power from these

unmined flamecloud gems using that animal bone of yours! We'd better not stay for long. We'll leave as soon as the blood drop in the animal bone is fully condensed. Any delay means trouble."

"Okay!" Nie Tian immediately got to work.

## Chapter 20: Collapse

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Upon hearing Nie Qian's orders, Nie Tian quickly took out the animal bone and put it on top of a protruding flamecloud gem.

A flickering spark of fire immediately shot out from the animal bone.

Nie Tian focused with rapt attention, his face lit up with joy. "The animal bone has started absorbing the power of the flame!"

"Brilliant!" Nie Qian said, equally elated.

That meant that the animal bone, as they had expected, was absorbing the flame power.

Obviously, whichever unmined flamecloud gems the animal bone came into contact with, would darken rapidly.

Within a very short time, a half-embedded flamecloud gem splintered and turned into ordinary gray stones after its flame power was drained.

"There!" Nie Qian barked, pointing to a larger flamecloud gem. "Be quick about it!"

Following her instruction without any hesitation, Nie Tian affixed the animal bone to a larger flamecloud gem formation.

Nie Qian continued to exuberantly locate new targets, even before the flame power was drained by the animal bone. "There! Over there! An even bigger piece! "

CRACK! CRACK!

The flamecloud gems cracked, one after another.

The animal bone had already absorbed a huge amount of flame power, and soon became red and translucent, releasing an odd, flame-like luster.

Sparks appeared on the animal bone. In the dark, they were like stars, shining brightly.

FIZZ!

Nie Tian came to notice that those sparks were converging, in great number, on a single point.

"Here! " Nie Qian said, pointing to a conspicuously large flamecloud gem.

Nie Tian placed the animal bone on the gem, face joyful. "The flames are condensing once again! "

POP!

A red flame flared up in the center of the animal bone.

Nie Tian probed the active flame with his spiritual awareness, and found that it was the very drop of blood in the middle of condensing.

Then, he felt an unusual attraction generated by the drop of blood.

CRACK! CRACK!

It seemed all the flamecloud gems in Mine #73 were starting to crack, and they altogether let out a horrifying sound.

At the same time, sparks that looked like millions of fireflies suddenly flew out of the flamecloud gems and into the animal bone.

RUUUUMBLE!

Even more horribly, the rumbling could also be heard in other mines on the hillside.

Along with the rumbling, the sparks that splashed out from the millions of flamecloud gems flew towards Mine #73, where Nie Tian was located, as if they were attracted by a unique magnet.



The extended members of the Nie clan and the other laborers, who were in the middle of their mining efforts in the various mines, all began to shout in alarm.

"What's going on?"

"What's happening?"

"The mine is collapsing! We have to get out of here!"

"Everybody get out of the mine, now!"

"A catastrophe is upon us! "

" ... "

People ran wildly from their workplaces and bolted in horror towards the exit of the various mines one after another.

Nie Qian also panicked. "Gosh, Little Tian! This animal bone is much too frightening. It absorbs the flame power too fast! This mine is crumbling!"

However, Nie Tian still held that piece of animal bone in his hand, as if he did not hear a single word of her cry.

It seemed that his spiritual sense was completely wrapped up in

the animal bone. His sparkling pupils were replete with arcane profundity.

BOOM!

In the blink of an eye, the entrance to Mine #73 was completed blocked by fallen rubble.

Intending to dissuade Nie Tian from channeling the flame power into the animal bone and take him out of the mine, Nie Qian suddenly realized that they had no chance of getting out through the entrance.

Nevertheless, an array of sparks infiltrated the rubble in the blocked mine and converged at the animal bone in Nie Tian's hand.

The animal bone continued to greedily absorb the flame power within the entire mountain and showed no sign of cessation!

In the meantime, Nie Tian's awareness and spirit had already drifted into the burning drop of blood, and he entered the mysterious world of fire.

In the unknown dimension, he saw the whole sky ablaze with ever-changing lights and balls of scorching flame converging into a giant flaming dragon.

WHOOSH!

Outside of the mine, the rich spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth surrounding Cloudsoaring Mountain also quietly wafted to the unimpressive peak, although no one could tell why.

The white spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth seeped through the entrance and into Mine #73.

The anxious Nie Qian suddenly felt that every breath she took contained an abundance of spiritual Qi.

Considering how concentrated it was, she found that the amount of spiritual Qi around Nie Tian was staggering. It seemed that the dense spiritual Qi in the mine was being infused into his body through his pores.

Her wide eyes were fixed on Nie Tian, gleaming with ecstasy, perplexity, and astonishment.

She was overwhelmed by the changes in the mine, floundering over what she should do, and how she could help Nie Tian.

Though the entrance had been sealed up by the fallen rubble, an ocean of flame energy streamed through the gaps among the rubble and converged into the animal bone.

She knew that she could not get out of the mine for now, and had to accept everything in front of her eyes.

At the same time...

Behind Cloudsoaring Peak was another mountain, the height of which was second only to Cloudsoaring Peak, allowing it to look out over all the other mountains. Inside of it, a skinny old man wearing sackcloth was refining a spirit tool in a stone chamber. Suddenly, he dropped the spiritual tool and muttered, "Strange. Why is the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth abruptly undergoing such tremendous changes?" He instantly assumed the lotus position, and gradually closed his eyes.

A blurry shadow drifted out of the top of his skull and flew away from the stone chamber like a ghost.

The vague shadow flickered in the air as if it were a reflected image on the water. Unreal as it looked, it made its way to the mountain of the Nie clan by following the flow of the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth.

The vague shadow flew deep along the stone tunnel of the mine.

Soon after, it arrived at the bottom of Mine #73, where Nie Tian was, and snuck in by flowing through the gaps among the rocks.

After entering, the vague shadow became more transparent, making it even harder to be seen by the naked eye.

Staying in the shadows in the corner, the vague shadow looked around and then shifted all of his attention onto Nie Tian and the

animal bone in his hand.

"What?!"

Nie Qian, who was standing by Nie Tian, was obviously unaware of its existence.

RUUUMBLE!

It seemed that the entire mountain was shaking. As a result, huge rocks hanging overhead shattered and rolled down from the top of the mine where Nie Tian and Nie Qian were positioned.

The vague shadow hiding in the dark lifted its head and flicked the falling rocks out of its way.

Seeing the falling rocks approaching them, Nie Qian was horrified and wailed inwardly in despair.

To her surprise though, the huge rocks, which were clearly on their way to crush Nie Tian and Nie Qian, were pushed off their original trajectory by some unknown force, and fell to the other side of the mine.

Nie Qian, who should have been crushed, was still standing next to Nie Tian, safe and sound, as if they were safeguarded by the Heavens.

After a long time...

Flame power stopped converging from all directions, as if the flame power of the flamecloud gems in the entire mountain had been dried up by the animal bone.

Still holding the animal bone in his hand, Nie Tian, unaware of the tremendous changes in the mine, was still in a dream state.

The long-lasting vibration in the mine ground to a halt while the fallen rocks were piled up high around the two of them.

In contrast, the place where they stood was void of even a single piece of gravel. Nie Qian found it incredible and inwardly extended her gratitude to the ancestors of the Nie clan for their protection.

It took a long time for the animal bone in Nie Tian's hand to return to a dark-brown color.

In the meantime, Nie Tian gradually awoke from his reverie. When he opened his eyes, the first words he uttered were, "The drop of blood in the animal bone has at long last fully congealed!"

Hearing these words, the blurry shadow fluttered slightly, like ripples on water, its mind completely shaken.

# Chapter 21: Advancing By Leaps And Bounds

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Also at this moment, Nie Qian observed that the dense spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth that had previously been gathering in the mine was dissipating at a fast pace.

It almost seemed as if its sole purpose was to be absorbed by the animal bone. When the animal bone returned to its regular status and Nie Tian's soul emerged from it, the spiritual Qi also dispersed.

"Oh!"

With the animal bone in hand and a happy expression on his face, Nie Tian said, "Auntie, I... I have reached the sixth level of Qi Refining!"

"Really?!" Nie Qian exclaimed.

Nie Tian took a deep breath, squinted his eyes and carefully analyzed his spiritual Qi accumulation. Then he confirmed, "The accumulation of the spiritual Qi in my dantian and spiritual sea is as rich as those who have reached the sixth level of Qi Refining!"

"Really? Are you sure?" An incredulous expression appeared on Nie Qian's face.

Nie Tian nodded his head again.

"It must be the ancestors of the Nie clan who offered help!" Nie Qian rejoiced, pointing to the heaped-up rocks by their side, "During the collapse, rocks were falling everywhere except the place where we stood. This defies common sense. You gathered a stupendous amount of spiritual Qi simply by probing the animal bone in your hand. In the end, you advanced by leaps and bounds, reaching the sixth level of Qi Refining. In addition to the extraordinary magics the animal bone had displayed, your immense advancement must be the result of blessing of our ancestors."

"Maybe." Nie Tian smiled, disregarding Nie Qian's superstition.

The vague shadow hid itself in the dark place of the mine and quietly listened to what they had said, but his eyes were glued to the animal bone in Nie Tian's hand.

RUUUMBLE!

It was at this time that another thunderous vibration filled the mountain.

The flame energy of the flamecloud gems in the whole mountain had been drained by the animal bone, triggering drastic changes and destabilizing the structure of the entire mountain.

Watching the blocked entrance, Nie Qian suddenly awoke from her reverie. The euphoria in her eyes faded away, and fear began to simmer. "Oh, dear!" she blurted. "We have to get out as quickly as we can or we'll be buried in the belly of the mountain!"



The sight of the rubble-blocked entrance unnerved Nie Tian, stripping him of any desire to properly study the drop of blood in the animal bone.

"Hurry!" Nie Qian said. "Move this rubble away, we have to get out of here as quickly as possible!"

Nie Tian nodded and prepared to act immediately.

RUUUMBLE!

Another loud noise rose up from the other mines. Nie Qian and Nie Tian looked at each other for a moment, knowing that other mines must have undergone great changes and they would die if they stayed inside any longer.

As they prepared to leave, they heard another roar, and felt the entire mountain quivering.

In the dark, the vague shadow that not even Nie Qian could detect also noticed the precarious situation.

The shadow looked toward the entrance and began to move its hands in a strange fashion, as if it were adjusting something.

The spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth that had been streaming outwards along the rock floor, followed the shadow's movements

as if it was suddenly being manipulated.

KAKAKA!

The rubble blocking the entrance to the mine was pulled sideways by an invisible force, and then burst outwards.

In a very short period of time, a passage through the blocked entrance was cleared out.

Nie Tian and Nie Qian gazed at the entrance, suddenly acutely aware that the challenge facing them had inexplicably been cleared up.

"Auntie..." Nie Tian scratched his head suspiciously. "Are we really being protected by our ancestors? "

According to common sense, there was no way that the vibration of mountain could so precisely push away the rubble from the entrance.

Even Nie Tian, who was by no means superstitious, couldn't help but waver a bit because of the recurring abnormal phenomena.

"Absolutely!" Nie Qian's eyes gleamed with confidence, and she added, "Quit standing there, get going, quickly!"

As soon as she finished and before Nie Tian even gave his reply,

she took hold of his arm and strode towards the entrance along the magically opened passageway.

Together, they made their way through the passageway, walking along a space that had been mysteriously cleared to accommodate two people passing side by side.

Their escape proceeded surprisingly smoothly, and the mountain was still shaking even as they emerged.

Seeing Nie Qian and Nie Tian racing out of the entrance covered with dust, Nie Xiang, the keeper of Nie clan, stammered, "M-m... miss, how did you two get out?"

Having seen Nie Qian and Nie Tian rushing out of the mine, many anxious members of the Nie clan, along with numerous frightened laborers, spoke their heartfelt congratulations.

"Unbelievable! Truly unbelievable!"

"We all thought that you would end up buried alive in the mine! "

"God bless you, eldest sister!"

" ... "

Nie Qian was quite relieved to have escaped. Dragging Nie Tian far away from the rumbling mountain, she said, "It was all thanks

to our ancestors."

"I think so too." Nie Xiang had a weird expression on his face. In his heart, he felt that the fact that Nie Qian and Nie Tian could make it out alive was simply a miracle. After echoing Nie Qian's view, he put on a bitter expression, saying, "Dozens of Nie clan members died, and countless laborers will sleep in the mines for all eternity. This is a huge catastrophe."

His words resonated with Nie Qian, who gravely said, "This incident... will have a significant impact on the clan."

Nie Xiang nodded with a bitter smile, "The main task of our Nie clan is to help the Cloudsoaring sect mine flamecloud gems in this mountain. Such enormous changes will disrupt mining efforts for some time. I'm afraid we won't be able to collect enough flamecloud gems to hand over to the Cloudsoaring sect this year. They'll definitely blame us for this."

Many surviving members of the Nie clan were flustered, perplexed, and completely taken aback.

"What should we do?!"

"How can our clan keep a foothold in Black Cloud City without the Cloudsoaring sect's protection?"

"Severe misfortune is imminent. The new clanmaster just took office. With such a serious incident, he will definitely punish us

heavily!"

"Oh, no!"

Nie Xiang stared in chagrin at Nie Qian. "Eldest sister, what do you think?"

As an extended relative of the Nie clan, Nie Xiang had come into his position because of Nie Donghai. Now that Nie Beichuan had become the clanmaster, he was bent on replacing him with one of his cronies.

For some time now, Nie Beichuan had been trying to pick a fight with him and thus come up with a good excuse to fire him, but had never succeeded in his efforts. Because of this disaster though, he would most likely be able to remove Nie Xiang from his post and even impose a severe punishment on him.

"It was a natural disaster," Nie Qian said consolingly. "It has nothing to do with you. I will faithfully recount the process when I go back. You do not have to be worried much."

"Easier said than done..." Nie Xiang sighed.

He knew well the accession of Nie Beichuan had left the father and daughter team of Nie Donghai and Nie Qian in a very perilous position in the clan. Bent on making a splash, Nie Beichuan would never forgo this golden opportunity.

Nie Xiang was sure that he would be punished as an example to warn others.

"Nie Tian and I will go back now," Nie Qian said, "but rest assured, I will try my best to help you."

"Fine." Nie Xiang helplessly nodded his head.

"You must not take reckless actions within this period," Nie Qian continued. "You have to wait until the vibrations completely fade away. Then you can get the dead bodies out of the mines, re-open the stone tunnel, and resume the mining of flamecloud gems."

Even she did not know that all the dramatic changes were caused by the animal bone in Nie Tian's hand.

She also did not know the flame power of all the flamecloud gems in the whole mountain had been drained by the animal bone.

With one hand in his pocket, gently stroking the animal bone, Nie Tian looked up at the vibrating peak, a stern expression on his face.

Only he could sense that after this incident, all the flamecloud gems in the whole mountain had turned into nothing more than ordinary and useless rocks.

"Let's go back." Nie Qian said. With some parting words to Nie Xiang, she turned with Nie Tian to head back to Black Cloud City.

Not long before she and Nie Tian had left, a rippling shadow had slipped out of the entrance and gazed towards her and Nie Tian for a while before drifting back toward the mountain behind Cloudsoaring Peak. Not a trace was left behind of its passage.

## Chapter 22: An Impasse

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It was evening, and the tenacious glow of the setting sun pierced through the luxurious canopy of trees to cast light onto the rocky forest floor.

Nie Tian and Nie Qian were on their way back to Black Cloud City. After some time passed, Nie Tian broke his long silence and finally gave voice to the suspicion in his heart. "Auntie, I feel... from now on, I am afraid that our clan can no longer harvest flamecloud gems from those mines."

Hearing his words, Nie Qian abruptly stopped in place.

Looking suspiciously at Nie Tian, and her eyes gradually turned serious and solemn. "What did you say? The flamecloud gems in the mines have been mined by our clan for many years. According to the Qi warrior who surveyed the mine recently, it should be several decades before the mine runs dry given our current mining speed, so how could it be drained now?"

The flamecloud gems in the mines could be said to be the lifeblood of the Nie clan, which traded their mining services for the protection of the Cloudsoaring sect.

Once the Nie clan could no longer mine flamecloud gems, it would be useless to the Cloudsoaring sect.

Even though she and Nie Donghai had been ill-treated after Nie Beichuan became the master of the clan, she definitely did not



want to see the whole clan be tossed aside by the Cloudsoaring sect.

"I'm sorry." Nie Tian bowed his head, took out the animal bone, and said, "It was all because of this. All the flame power consumed by the condensation of the drop of blood was from all the flamecloud gems in the mines! It took all of that power to condense the drop of blood! I'm pretty sure that all the flamecloud gems have turned to regular rocks which cannot generate a scrap of flame power."

Nie Qian gasped with astonishment. "The condensation of a single drop of blood absorbed all the flame power of the flamecloud gems, this... how is this possible?"

"I don't know, but that's what happened." Nie Tian put on a wry smile.

"Impossible, it's absolutely impossible!" Nie Qian shook her head repeatedly, with a look of disbelief on her face.

"If you don't believe me then just forget about it," Nie Tian said, looking irritated.

"Now isn't the time for arguing. It's getting dark and we should try to get back to Black Cloud City as soon as possible." Nie Qian surveyed the path ahead. "A serious accident has occurred in the mines. I have to inform your grandfather of the situation so that he will be ready for any consequences."

"Fine." Nie Tian spoke no more.

With that, they ceased arguing and continued on toward Black Cloud City.

A quarter of an hour later, Nie Qian suddenly froze.

"What's wrong?" Nie Tian asked, puzzled.

Nie Qian looked around grimly, her breath coming in ragged pants. Waves of spiritual power were rippling out from Nie Qian, fluctuations too noticeable to be ignored even by Nie Tian.

RUSTLE!

Suddenly, the leaves of the trees stirred, despite the lack of even the slightest breeze.

"Nie Tian," she shouted, "get to Cloudsoaring Mountain as quickly as you can!"

CLATTER!

The silver bracelets she wore on her arm instantly flew out towards the two trees in front of her, shining with silvery spiritual light.

CLANK! CLANK!

The sound of clanking metal could then be heard from behind the trees, accompanied by odd laughter.

In response, Nie Tian's face fell, and he instantly realized that something was wrong.

With a muffled groan, Nie Qian looked back at Nie Tian, her eyes glittering with trepidation and anxiety.

"Go! " she urged.

WHOOSH!

The silver bracelets she had thrown out were now spinning back towards her at a high speed.

They were followed by two men dressed in blue, with greasy smiles plastered across their faces.

One of them gave Nie Tian a cold glance. "Run? Where can he run to?"

BANG!

In that moment, the silver bracelets slammed into a water shield

that Nie Qian had formed moments ago with spiritual power.

Nie Qian immediately staggered backward several steps. The silver bracelets didn't immediately fall onto the ground, but stuck on the water wall like two pendants.

She slowly reached out and retrieved the silver bracelets one by one, her face pale. Then, she looked at the two men and said, "I've seen you two before in Black Cloud City!"

She remembered clearly that the two in front of her were among those strangers who had been seen wandering around the Nie clan a few months ago.

She soon realized that the appearance of these two people here must have something to do with the altercation with Yuan Qiuying in front of the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion.

"You'll be dead soon anyway," the other man said with a grin. "We aren't afraid to tell you that we were sent by Mrs. Yuan to kill you!"

"As I expected!" Nie Qian replied, gnashing her teeth.

One of the men had a thin scar at the corner of his eye. His lips curved up in an odd smile as he said, "Second brother, you kill the kid. As for this woman... I'll take care of her. We were ordered to torture her well and good before killing her. Considering how much we're being paid, we have to satisfy Mrs. Yuan."

The other man smirked knowingly, then nodded and said, "Big brother, I'll join you after I kill the kid."

"How considerate! Hahaha!"

Considering their brazen banter, it was obvious how much they looked down on Nie Qian and Nie Tian. In their eyes, they were already dead.

"He's still a child! Please let him go!" Nie Qian begged. "Trust me, we have plenty of treasure back in the Nie clan. I'll triple what Yuan Qiuying offered!"

The initial engagement left her well aware that these two men in blue had at least middle-stage Lesser Heaven cultivation bases, as well as an overt killing intent. Clearly, they were not the type of Qi warriors who were engrossed in cultivation, but rather, professional killers who were born to slaughter.

She knew too well that she was no match for either of them.

"We have benefited from the grace of Yuan clan, and are grateful that we have this opportunity to pay them back." The man with the scar at the corner of his eye rubbed his chin and chuckled. "By the way, I happen to think you're quite pretty. You'd might as well just resign yourself to fate."

Nie Qian knew that she was unlikely to survive the day. She

couldn't help but shriek, "Nie Tian! Run!"

CLANK!

Swinging her arms through the air, she slammed the silver bracelets into each other, which created an ear-piercing whistle. The bracelets then whizzed rapidly towards the two men.

"They say that the Nie clan is on the decline. Today, I find it is true." The man in charge shook his head. As the silver bracelets shot towards him, he added, "You're the eldest daughter of the Nie clan and the ex-wife of Yun Zhiguo, but the spiritual tool you use is unexpectedly only of Elementary grade."

Sneering, he raised a bronze prismatic shield.

WHOOSH!

Reddish-yellow light radiated from the surface of the shield, which was rapidly filled with bright, intricate patterns.

"Gravity upheaval!" he said, snorting coldly.

Subsequently, the gravity around him seemed to sharply increase by several-fold.

The silver bracelets flopped down onto the ground due to the enormous gravity transformations!

"Second brother, even though we ensured that there were no passersby, we still have to finish them as soon as possible to prevent any unexpected developments!"

"Alright, big brother, I'll kill this brat now!" The other man suddenly rushed towards Nie Tian.

"Nie Tian, run!" Nie Qian yelled wildly.

However, even as the man closed in with lightning speed, Nie Tian remained in place, his eyes burning with flames of rage.

The man running towards Nie Tian wore a merciless expression as he derisively said, "His cultivation base is merely at the fourth level of Qi Refining. Considering my brother's Mystic Amber Shield exerts a fivefold gravitation field, it would be a miracle for him to escape!"

His words pushed Nie Qian further into despair, and caused her to wail hysterically, "I'll hunt you down even if I become a ghost!"

WHOOSH!

Breathing heavily, Nie Tian rapidly concentrated his spiritual power into both of his legs in an attempt to combat the strengthened gravity.

Unfortunately, the ground beneath his feet seemed to have become a giant magnet, inexorably pulling him downward.

He unleashed his full strength, yet still failed to shake off the gravity. His feet could not move an inch; it almost felt as if there was a huge rock weighing them down.

The feelings of despair, unwillingness, and frustration inside of him grew more and more intense as the man approached.

It was also at this moment that he suddenly felt the animal bone in his hand turn burning hot.



## Chapter 23: Not Leaving A Single Trace

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As the man dressed in blue walked towards Nie Tian, he slowly lifted his hand. "Resign yourself to your fate, brat!"

CRACKLE!

Tremendous frost spiritual power suddenly gathered, seemingly freezing his hand.

Bone-biting coldness emanated out, making Nie Tian, who was three meters away from him, feel as if he had fallen into an ice cellar.

WHOOSH!

From a distance, he pointed his hand towards Nie Tian, and cold, white streams of mist slithered towards Nie Tian, like long, slender snakes.

Due to the powerful gravitational force affecting him, Nie Tian was in an increasingly dangerous situation as the cold mist struck.

Not far away, the sound of clanking metal echoed out, along with a cold guffaw from the man with the scar.

Nie Tian had no need to look over to understand that Nie Qian's situation was just as precarious as his.

"Power!" Nie Tian cried in his heart. "I need power!"

Apparently, some invisible force from another world heard his cry. First, he felt the animal bone in his hand grow burning hot.

In the next moment, the scorching heat emitting from the animal bone spread from his palm to the rest of his body.

He clearly felt the heat waves, as staggeringly hot as magma, suddenly fly along his meridians to his feet.

He was suddenly overwhelmed by a strange sensation, as if he now existed inside of a monstrous flame.

ROAR!

A growl erupted in his mind, the source being none other than the drop of blood within the animal bone.

Suddenly, the terrifying gravity from the depths of the earth seemed to be rendered completely powerless.

Moments ago, he had been pinned in place, but now, he took two steps back.

The man in blue clothes was stretching his frozen hand out toward Nie Tian's chest. When he suddenly found that Nie Tian

could move freely, he couldn't help but murmur, "What?!"

But then, streams of white mist flowed around his fingers and roared towards Nie Tian.

To Nie Tian, those streams resembled dozens of white frost snakes eager to devour him.

As the white frost snakes slithered through the air, the extremely cold spiritual power filled the area around Nie Tian, making it a world of ice and frost.

FIZZ!

Yet, a moment later, the icy cold seemed to be consumed by a ball of heat, transforming it into more white fog.

"Oh..." Nie Tian suddenly whispered, subconsciously glancing down at the animal bone.

The animal bone became as hot as a burning piece of iron, making it impossible to hold onto any longer.

The drop of blood hovered in the animal bone as if it were a small sun spouting raging flames.

ROAR!

The roar from the drop of blood was only audible to him, and seemed to be filled with impatience and irritability.

However, Nie Tian seemed to be able to understand the meaning behind the roar.

Hoping for the best, he flung the animal bone mercilessly towards his opponent.

As soon as the animal bone left his hand, it transformed into a long trail of crimson flames, in the vague shape of a dragon, which whizzed rapidly towards the man in blue.

FIZZ!

The white frost snakes strangely dissipated into white fog when they collided with the crimson flames created by the animal bone.

Seeing the icy snakes dissipating one after another, the man in blue couldn't prevent his expression from flickering.

However, the flames created by the animal bone left him no time to make any defensive moves, and were in front of him before he could even react.

With his eyes fixed on the man, Nie Tian couldn't help but notice that large amounts of water vapor had begun to emanate out from him.

Nie Tian also clearly noted the the fear and despair in the man's eyes.

BANG!

The animal bone slammed directly into his chest, sending sparks flashing out, which instantly transformed into another cluster of crimson flames, flames which seemed to be alive and conscious as they rampaged through his whole body.

The man even did not even have time to utter a heart-rending cry before he was devoured. His body instantly melted down like a piece of ice thrown into a stove, and he dissipated without leaving a single drop of blood behind.

The man had seemed completely ferocious only a few seconds ago, but now he had vanished completely.

The place where he stood was devoid of any trace of him whatsoever; both his bones and blood had completely disappeared as if he had never even existed.

The only thing remaining behind was a red, burning animal bone.

The crimson flames that were scattered everywhere returned to the animal bone as if they had a consciousness.

At the same time, the area surrounding the animal bone, which had possessed a gravitational force five times that of normal, seemed to have been forcibly normalized.

Nie Tian gazed at the terrifying animal bone and subconsciously licked his lips.

A Qi warrior who excelled in using the frost power of the middle-stage of Lesser Heaven had been burned alive by the flames from the animal bone until not even a single hair was left. The ferocity demonstrated by the animal bone made him unable to believe what he had seen.

He had been sure that the animal bone was very unique, and that affirmation grew particularly intense when he realized that the drop of blood inside of it could not be congealed until all the flamecloud gems in the mountain had been absorbed.

However, it wasn't until this moment that he realized that he had underestimated the terrifying power of the animal bone.

PUFF!

Even as Nie Tian stood there in a daze, not far away, Nie Qian coughed up a mouthful of fresh blood. Her spirits were rapidly dropping.

The man with the scar smiled as he approached her with his shield held out in front of him.

Nie Qian had backed up into a tree, and was holding a silver bracelet in each hand. Despite the danger she was in, she couldn't help but turn her head to look toward Nie Tian.

"Little, Little Tian..." she murmured, fearful he might already be dead.

When she saw that he had somehow survived while the man hunting him had vanished somehow, relief filled her heart.

Seeing her strange expression, her opponent also looked curiously at Nie Tian.

Stunned, he raved, "Second brother, I told to you to hurry up, so where the hell are you?"

He had previously been focused on dealing with Nie Qian and spared little attention for Nie Tian. As far as he was concerned, Nie Tian was locked in place by the fivefold gravity, and should have fallen prey to instant slaughter. It was impossible for something to go wrong, so there was nothing interesting to see anyway.

The man who cultivated frost spiritual power had been burned up in a few seconds after being hit by the animal bone, without a drop of blood being left behind.

Therefore, when his brother looked over but failed to spot him, he simply assumed that his brother had walked away.

After a moment of shock, Nie Qian quickly regained her composure and once again cried out. "Little Tian! Run while you have the chance! Get to the Cloudsoaring sect immediately!"

She had no idea what had happened either. But from her point of view, the sudden disappearance of that man was the only chance for Nie Tian to escape.

With a gloomy face, the man in the leading position looked around and grew impatient. "Second brother, where the fuck are you?"

"He had a stomachache and went off to take a crap," snapped Nie Tian. Walking over to the animal bone, he reached down slowly to pick it up. It was now dark-brown in color.

As he picked up the bone, he meticulously avoided the sparks, which he knew could devour him.

The horrifying scene of the previous man's death cast a cloud over his heart, making him fearful of the recurring changes of the animal bone.

Fortunately, the restored animal bone showed no sign of such changes.

Once the animal bone returned to his hand, a strong confidence suddenly arose inside of him somehow.



He suddenly had the feeling that he was capable of controlling the animal bone!

"Hurry and run!" Nie Qian cried.

In her eyes, Nie Tian's act was reckless and blind. Since the assailant was absent, Nie Tian ought to hurry up and escape. Every second he wasted, his chance of survival would be diminished.

But instead of running away, he decided to have a war of words with the leading assailant. She was so anxious that she wanted to drive him to his senses by slapping him in the face.

"I won't run." Clutching the animal bone, Nie Tian walked towards her step by step, a surprisingly calm expression on his face.

The man with the scar at the corner of his eye finally realized that Nie Tian was free from the restriction of the gravitational field and had begun to advance in his direction. "Where is my second brother, brat?"

He was not stupid. Nie Tian's calmness and unusual escape from the gravitational field drove him to the realization that something completely inexplicable must have occurred.

If that was not the case, his second brother would never have disappeared for no reason.

"Like I said, Uncle," Nie Tian answered seriously, "he ran off into the bushes because he had the squirts."

"You bastard! Cut the crap!" The man's face darkened. Shifting his complete attention from Nie Qian to Nie Tian, he said, "No matter what parlor tricks you played, I'll smash your bones into pieces once I get ahold of you. Then I'll find out exactly what just happened!"

"Tenfold gravity!"

# Chapter 24: Burned To Ashes

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CRACK!

Tree branches in the grove suddenly snapped and fell down to the ground.

A passing bird took a nosedive and slammed into the ground under the irresistible force of gravity.

With the man in blue at the center, a 50-meter circle formed that instantly became like a giant magnet, trapping all solid objects.

Even as Nie Qian backed up against the tree, the powerful gravitational force dragged her down toward the ground.

"Tenfold gravity!"

She looked over at Nie Tian with both shock and anxiety, secretly angered by his recklessness.

The blue-garbed man with the Mystic Amber Shield closed in on Nie Tian step by step, grinning the entire time. "What are you going to do now, punk?!"

Nie Tian had been able to move freely before, but because of the tenfold gravity, he was now unable to.

He frowned before he realized that a warm current was currently converging at his feet.

Plumes of heat from the animal bone he clasped in his hand were flowing along his meridians toward his feet.

The animal bone had been restored to its original state, but was now starting to heat up again.

As the animal bone became hot, Nie Tian's confidence was somehow bolstered and the advancement of the man in blue did not fluster him at all.

Instead of rushing into action though, he calmly looked at the man and then clenched his hand down onto the animal bone, gripping it so hard that blue veins bulged out.

"Where the hell is my second brother?!" the man cried, forcibly swinging the Mystic Amber shield at Nie Tian's head.

WHOOSH!

The Mystic Amber shield left his hand and flew, with great force, towards Nie Tian's head, sailing through the air in a perfect arc.

An even stronger gravitational field emanated from that Mystic Amber shield, making the space around Nie Tian sink sharply.

"Little Tian!" Nie Qian shrieked.

Also at this moment, the animal bone in Nie Tian's hand became as red as hot iron and unleashed an unruly flame power.

Nie Tian suddenly threw the animal bone in the air. "Go!"

When the animal bone whizzed out, the heat gathered around his feet burst out in spectacular fashion.

The terrifying gravity pulling from below suddenly became bearable. As his feet regained the ability to move, Nie Tian darted to the side and evaded the Mystic Amber shield

ROAR!

A raging howl, only audible to Nie Tian, seemed to have burst out from his own soul. He clearly saw the animal bone suddenly transform into a conflagration and swallow the man in blue.

The tenfold gravity that was able to restrain everything in the world was completely dispelled!

CLANK!

Without the steady support of its owner, the Mystic Amber shield flopped down on the ground behind Nie Tian.

The owner of the Mystic Amber shield was promptly consumed by the raging flames.

It only took a few seconds for the man to be devoured by the towering column of fire, vanishing without a trace.

Everything, including his clothes, body, and breath, was burned to ashes.

Within a very short time, all his belongings in this world had been wiped out, while the animal bone rapidly condensed its fiery flames and eventually returned to a dark-brown color.

Standing not far away, Nie Qian, who was previously in despair, stared in disbelief at what had happened.

She could not help but rapidly blink so as to get a better view of the the scene in front of her.

After several moments, she saw that Nie Tian was standing there tall and straight, whereas the malicious assassin had vanished without a trace.

She remained bewildered for a moment before gradually regaining her senses and murmuring, "Is that man, dead...? Burned to death? Scorched to ashes? "

THUMP THUMP!

After the gravity returned to normal, Nie Tian ran up to the animal bone and crouched down to retrieve it.

"Oh, my precious," he exclaimed as he happily stroked the animal bone.

Not until that moment did Nie Qian utterly awake from befuddlement and cry out in horror, "Watch out for that animal bone!"

Nie Tian looked up and held the animal bone up in the air. He said with a smile, "Auntie, it is my precious, how could it hurt me?"

"Your precious? Can you ... control it?!"

Nie Tian nodded his head. "Of course!"

After a pause, he pointed behind him and explained, "The second brother of that man was also burned to death; not even a drop of blood was left behind. Not until then did I come to understand why everybody was eager to obtain a spiritual tool. A powerful spiritual tool can turn the tables in battle!"

# Chapter 25: A Different Place

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FIZZ!

The condensed drop of blood in the animal bone flared up when Nie Tian's mind drifted into it.

In the blood, he saw strands of fire suddenly twisting and interweaving with each other, forming a strange animal pattern.

The pattern was in the shape of a dragon, but it was constantly changing and full of mystery.

"Whoah!" Nie Tian exhaled softly and tried to calm his mind.

It was as if a secret switch had been activated. The animal bone flew from his palm and quietly floated up in front of his chest, emanating scorching flames.

His mind instantly returned from the animal bone to reality, however his eyes were still focused on it.

WHOOSH!!

Strands of flames started to swirl around the animal bone and seemingly produced a terrifying gravitational force.

After a few seconds, the animal bone and the lines of fire evolved



into a flame vortex.

CRACKLE!

The formation of the flame vortex was followed by a strange sound from the surroundings, where numerous colorful spatial rifts appeared.

Surrounding objects within his room, such as the tea set on the stone table and the clothes on the bed, were forcibly sucked into the spatial rifts, and vanished in the blink of an eye.

A moment later, even the stone table and the stone slab on the ground were sucked into the rifts.

CREAK! CREAK!

The bed Nie Tian was sitting on began to buckle because of the immense suction, as if it was also about to fly into the spatial rifts with him in tow.

Suddenly, fear sprang up in his heart, as if he were suddenly aware that he might never see his grandfather and Nie Qian ever again..

Even as fear overwhelmed him and he was about to cry out for help, the flame vortex became like the mouth of a ferocious monster and gulped him down.

Then, the flame vortex drastically shrank down into a grain-sized spark of fire.

The spark of fire flickered a few times, and then disappeared into thin air.

WHOOSH!

The gravitational force increased dramatically and the flashing spatial rifts swallowed everything in the room before closing up one by one.

Only after the flame vortex and the oddly flashing spatial rifts vanished, was the small room suddenly peaceful once again.

However, the stone table, stone chair, wooden bed, and everything else was gone along with Nie Tian.

Shortly, the voice of Nie Qian came from outside. "Little Tian, are you sleeping?"

Nie Donghai, despite having voiced his belief that Nie Tian could control the animal bone, was still worried about him, especially after being told of the terrifying qualities of the animal bone by Nie Qian. As such, he had come along with Nie Qian. He wanted to use his experience and vision to explore the secret of the animal bone again.

Nie Qian called a few times, but when she got no response, forced Nie Tian's door open.

"Ah!" she screamed as she stepped into the room, finding everything in the room was gone.

Blue veins bulged on Nie Donghai's forehead. "How dare the Yuan clan kidnap Little Tian from our home!" he raged, not even taking the time to think about the situation.

He instantly assumed that Yuan Qiuying, after discovering that her two assassins were missing, had sent other powerful experts to take Nie Tian away.

"Father, what should we do?" Nie Qian shouted in a state of utter stupefaction. "What should we do to get him back!?"

"The Yun clan and Yuan clan must immediately release Little Tian! I am going to talk to my second brother who is the master of the Nie clan. If he is unwilling to stand out and protect Little Tian, I will never spare him! Nie Donghai left in a rage and rushed to find Nie Beichuan in the hope of freeing Nie Tian as soon as possible.

"Yuan Qiuying, should anything untoward happen to Little Tian, I will go after you till my last breath!" Nie Qian swore in sadness.

...

In the unknown world, the density of the spiritual energy defied any imagination.

Eight dragon skeletons could be seen, each around a thousand meters long. They were arranged in an octagonal pattern, with their heads all pointing toward an old, dilapidated altar, a structure stained with blotches of blood that made it seem as if it had been mercilessly eroded by time.

A spark suddenly gleamed from within the heart of the altar, which rapidly swelled into a fireball.

BANG!

The figure of a child could be seen flying out from the fireball down onto the ground.

CLANK!

Then, the gigantic fireball shrunk into a small piece of bone and dropped down near the foot of the kid.

Nie Tian, dizzy and racked with pain all over, was lying with his back on the altar and limbs spread wide.

Gazing at the overcast sky with his wide eyes, he gradually came to his senses. "What the hell is this place?"

A few seconds ago, he was in his room. He only remembered that the animal bone had transformed into a flame vortex and then gulped him down.

Then, he was here.

Despite lying on the altar, he could immediately detect that the gravity here was even stronger than the tenfold gravity field generated by the Mystic Amber Shield!

He lay there, his back tightly pressed against the cold, hard stone slab. Finally, he rose up to a sitting position, an effort which required all the strength he could muster.

"The amount of spiritual energy here is ten times thicker than Cloudsoaring Mountain!"

In the middle of breathing, he felt the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth in the air trickling down into the spiritual sea of his dantian.

Elated, he looked around curiously.

Almost immediately, he caught the sight of the eight huge, hill-like dragon heads surrounding him. "Dragon heads! There are eight huge dragon heads there!"

The eight dragon heads were bereft of any flesh or blood, leaving them as nothing but bare, bleached bones.

The dragon's eyeballs had long since ceased to exist. All of the empty sockets were facing him as if they were quietly analyzing him, which made his blood run cold.

He quickly shifted his view to the distance and realized that the eight huge dragon skeletons stretched a thousand meters away.

Further in the distance, numerous mountain peaks sat under the murky-gray sky, each of them as tall as Cloudsoaring Peak.

After carefully studying them, he was completely overwhelmed by astonishment to find that the objects, that had at first resembled mountain peaks, were in fact huge arms!

The huge arms were dark-yellow. Some had fists tightly clenched, as if they were unleashing endless fury; some fingers were widely opened as if to clasp the sky; some palms were imprinted with what seemed like the supreme theory of Heaven and Earth.

In the distance, those huge arms looked like giant mountain peaks towering up into the sky.

The other side of the arms were like the roots of towering old trees, buried deep into the earth.

It was as if the real bodies of the huge arm's owners were within the earth, attempting to rid themselves of the burial and fly up

into the sky!

Just the arms exposed outside were as enormous as mountains, Nie Tian could not imagine how colossal the bodies were of the owners who were buried under the earth!

"One, two, three... thirty-two!" He counted and found that there were at least 32 huge arms visible.

That meant that there were at least 16 colossal creatures buried deep in the earth!

"Eight huge dragons and also at least sixteen terrifyingly colossal creatures," he thought. "What is this place? Am I dreaming?" Then, he bit his tongue suddenly and felt an excruciating pain.

"I'm not dreaming? This is different from my previous experience, so it must not be a dream!"

He still remembered that after he battled Nie Hong, he had a high fever for quite a long time and frequently fell into different dreams.

The unknown world he saw in his dream was somewhat similar to the sight in front of him.

However, he always knew that all those dreams were simply dreams, not realities.

But this time, he was not in a dream but rather a real world, which was completely unknown to him.

WHOOSH!

The animal bone that brought him into this place was lying at his side, flickering with plumes of flame.

He subconsciously looked at it.

For an unknown reason, he felt an infinite sadness from within those flames.

The glowing flames seemed to be recounting something...

"Dragon?" Prompted by his memory, he recalled that his inner awareness had seen this strange world in the drop of blood condensed from the animal bone when he was in Mine #73.

That world bristled with countless raging flames that converged into a colossal dragon of flame.

On their way back to Black Cloud City, the animal bone had transformed into a dragon-shaped flame when he threw it at the two men dressed in blue.

After carefully thinking for awhile, he came to realize that the



animal bone was from a great fire dragon.

At the side of the altar, there were eight great dragons with only skeletons left. He speculated that they used to be fire dragons as well, belonging to the same species as the one from which the animal bone was taken.

"I should go around and have a look," he thought to himself. "This world must be bigger than what I have seen. There might be more secrets in this place beyond my view."

As he attempted to stand up, he found that the gravity of the earth had pinned him down to the ground.

He couldn't even rise to his feet!

...

# Chapter 26: The Epiphany

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"I can't even stand up...."

Nie Tian felt somewhat depressed as he sat there unsteadily on the altar, but it took him only a second to realize that he could make use of the wonders of this world for training purposes.

The stronger the gravity, the more burden was placed on the body, which made it a perfect place to train in physical strength.

Ever since he was young, he had known that he was much stronger physically than other children. He had made up for his poor cultivation base with his powerful physique, allowing him to win in fights against Nie Hong and others.

"Wheww!" He took in a large gulp of air and tried to move his arms about under the terrifying gravitational force.

Compared to moving his entire body, it required considerably less effort to just move his arms under the influence of the strong gravity.

Just as he expected, although waggling his arms was more difficult than usual, at least he was able to move them.

Sitting straight up on the broken altar, he raised one of his arms with great effort, doing his best to point it towards the sky and to feel the influence of the gravity on the arm.

In the meantime, he continued to examine his surroundings.

"Well?!" Staring at the giant arms in the distance and watching them stretching out of the earth to the heavens, his mind flickered with enlightenment.

Every one of them pointed to the heavens with a different gesture, as if each of them contained different emotions.

Being able to do nothing but hold his arms up, Nie Tian felt bored at first. However, after noticing the various gestures formed by the giants' hands, he opened up his mind and started to imitate them.

The first one he imitated was an arm that pointed to the sky with a tightly clenched fist and bulging veins.

His eyes were fixed on the mountain-sized arm, and soon he vaguely felt a wave of rage and begrudging emotion hidden inside the giant hand.

For unknown reasons, just by watching it, an unexpected surge of fury started to rise up in his heart, until his pupils were filled with a sea of rage. It all happened before he even realized what was going on.

The expression on his face grew feverish and angry, and a raging desire rose up to destroy the heavens and break all the shackles that had been formed in his heart.

After imitating the gesture of that giant arm, his mentality seemingly changed along with it, and his hand was filled with a new kind of power.

He could actually feel the spiritual power rushing out from his dantian's spiritual sea and rapidly flowing along his meridians into his raised hand.

In his arm, every meridian seemed full of raging flames, and the spiritual power that was flowing in his meridians also seemed to have been vested with wrath.

HISSSS!

All of a sudden, a white and misty spiritual aura formed on the back of his lifted fist!

Strands of the white spiritual aura were wrapped around his fist. It was an aura which contained unrestrained anger, and seemed to have strengthened his spiritual power.

"The sixth level of Qi Refining! Spiritual power overflow!"

Entering the sixth level of Qi Refining allowed him to channel his inner spiritual power to the surface of his body and infiltrate an enemy's body with his own spiritual power merely by touching them.

Back when he fought Nie Hong, who was in the sixth level of Qi Refining, Nie Hong had sent his lightning-charged spiritual power into Nie Tian's body as their fists met.

In the same way, every time their fists collided, more lightning power was left behind in his body, filling him with unbearable pain.

Not long ago, he had somehow stepped into the sixth level of Qi Refining in Mine #73, but he never had the chance to test the wonders of overflowing spiritual power.

Today, in this unknown heaven and earth, he almost effortlessly grasped the essence of spiritual power overflow of the sixth Qi Refining level.

This had completely exceeded his expectations.

Because, according to Nie Qian, after breaking into the sixth level of Qi Refining, one would have to make quite a few attempts before they could freely overflow their spiritual power to the surface of their body and retract it back inside.

However, in a surprising turn of events, he succeeded with merely one attempt.

Moreover, he could clearly sense the rage contained in the spiritual power that was wrapped around his fist.

Emotions were not attributes of spiritual power. They shouldn't contain extra strength, but he believed that the rage attached to his spiritual power had its own secrets.

Unfortunately, Nie Hong wasn't here. Otherwise, he would be able to throw him a punch and see if the rage could provide extra strength.

"Yee?!" Just as his thoughts were beginning to wander, his mentality changed again, and he was no longer full of wild rage.

The spiritual power that had previously converged into his raised arm rapidly flowed back to his spiritual sea. Before long, there was no spiritual power left in his arm at all.

He immediately understood why: his mind had drifted, so he had failed to maintain his mentality of rage and frenzy.

When the rage disappeared and he became calm again, the miraculous sensation on his fist, that was pointing to the sky, also vanished. As the spiritual power returned to his dantian, everything went back to normal.

"Mentality! Mentality is the key!"

After the epiphany, he refocused his mind and laid his eyes on the mountain-like giant arm in the distance.

He put his heart into analyzing the giant hand that was balled up

in a fist, and he felt all the monstrous rage hidden in it. As he gradually submerged himself in it, he once again found himself influenced by the emotion and his heart grew more and more angry.

When his heart was full of rage, he imitated the gesture of the giant arm and thrust his clenched fist into the sky.

Strands of spiritual power once again surged out of his spiritual sea as he extended his arm. Those strands were instantly injected into the meridians within his arm, and roared their way into his fist.

HISSS!

As expected, the light, white spiritual aura, full of rage, reappeared on his fist.

"This is it!" A sense of joy rose in his heart. In the meantime, the rage that he had tried so hard to build up, suddenly vanished.

In a flash, the amazing power he had just recovered left him again.

However, through this attempt, he had found the secret to the trick, and then he practiced it over and over again.

In his later practices, whenever he was able to maintain a raging heart, the special feeling of his fist being filled with rage would

always be there.

Meanwhile, he also found that he could only cultivate the rage in his heart when gazing at the distant giant arm.

When he didn't look at the giant arm and tried to make the punch by channeling his own rage, that mysterious sensation wouldn't appear.

It seemed that he had to fully understand the begrudging rage contained in the giant hand, so as to truly grasp the essence of that punch.

After realizing this, he calmed himself and stopped wasting his energy, and instead, once again fixed his eyes on the giant arm, trying to truly feel the mental status of its owner when they threw that punch.

He was completely submerged in his thoughts and lost track of time; he forgot about the environment he was in and even forgot himself.

When he forgot about his physical form, he entered a trance in which he had the sudden feeling that he was the owner of the giant arm, that he feared no rules or restrictions, and that he dared to fight the heaven and earth.

PTSSS! PTSSS!



After an unknown period of time, the animal bone by his feet suddenly spewed tiny flames.

It seemed the drop of blood in the animal bone had been consuming its flame power. Now, after it had consumed a certain amount, the animal bone began to change.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

One after another, clusters of flame shot out of the animal bone, dragging Nie Tian out of his thoughts.

At first glance, Nie Tian found that the drop of blood in the animal bone had shrunk considerably, compared to when it was fully formed.

He instantly realized, without knowing it, that he had consumed a considerable amount of the flame energy.

Even as he was in a state of bewilderment, the animal bone continued to change and once again transformed into a bright vortex of flame.

Seeing the formation of the flame vortex, he suddenly understood the flame power left in the animal bone was now only enough to open the portal to home.

Otherwise, as the flame energy continued to run out, there wouldn't be enough power left in the animal bone to form the

flame vortex and send him back.

Looking at those mountain-like giant arms, he was extremely reluctant to leave, as he had just discovered part of the secrets contained in them. "I have no choice but to leave for now?"

However, the animal bone didn't give him any time to think before he was swallowed by the bright vortex of flame.

# Chapter 27: A Major Stir

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Meanwhile, back in the Nie clan...

During the ten days in which Nie Tian had been missing, Nie Donghai had forced Nie Beichuan to go to the Yun clan with him and to demand them to release Nie Tian.

On the other hand, the Yun clan insisted that Nie Tian's disappearance had nothing to do with them.

In the past, the Cloudsoaring sect seldom showed interest in Nie Donghai's matters, due to their resentment towards him.

However, for unknown reasons, this time the Cloudsoaring sect unexpectedly arranged for Li Fan to assist Nie Donghai the moment Nie Donghai informed them of Nie Tian's situation.

Li Fan led Nie Donghai to the Yun clan, turning it upside down in a search for Nie Tian. They didn't give even the slightest face to the Yun clan.

Unfortunately, they found nothing.

Yet, Li Fan didn't stop there. He went to the Yuan clan in Frost Stone City and made another thorough search in their territory.

However, that search was also in vain.

Ten days later, Li Fan continued to stay in the Nie clan and search for Nie Tian's whereabouts in other nearby cities, using the Cloudsoaring sect's power.

Obviously, the Cloudsoaring sect was truly concerned with Nie Tian's disappearance this time, leaving no stone unturned in their efforts to find him.

As the current clanmaster, Nie Beichuan secretly gloated at the sight of the Cloudsoaring sect going through all that trouble to search for Nie Tian, and yet he still provided full cooperation.

It was early at dawn when Nie Qian and Nie Donghai came to Li Fan's guest room, asking whether the Cloudsoaring sect had news about Nie Tian.

Upon seeing Li Fan shake his head, Nie Qian said with weak voice, "Mr. Li, Little Tian is our last remaining emotional support. He... is all we have. Please, you must find him."

"Please make extra efforts, Mr. Li!" Nie Donghai pleaded with bloodshot eyes.

In the past ten days, he hadn't slept well for even a single night, and was looking more frail than ever.

Nie Tian's disappearance almost crushed him. Like a person plagued by sickness, he had softly called for Nie Tian in the night,

hoping Nie Tian might hear his calling and suddenly return.

"I've asked a large number of friends within a 50 kilometers radius to look for information of Nie Tian's whereabouts. Once he shows up, I will be informed." Li Fan frowned, looking a bit puzzled. "Frankly, it may be true that... neither the Yun clan nor the Yuan clan have anything to do with it. We have people in their clans that have close ties with our sect, and I've collected information from them. It seems they truly have no knowledge of Nie Tian's disappearance."

Nie Qian was on the verge of breaking down. "If it wasn't the Yun Family or the Yuan Family, then who could it be?"

The significance the Cloudsoaring sect had attached to this incident had deeply touched Nie Donghai and Nie Qian. They knew the Cloudsoaring sect had tried their best.

If the Cloudsoaring sect had failed to find Nie Tian after spending so much effort and pulling so many strings, it would be almost impossible for the Nie clan to find him.

"Please rest assured. As long as Nie Tian is alive, there will be a way." Li Fan tried to comfort them.

The next moment, Li Fan's expression suddenly flickered. After a quiet expression of surprise, he dashed out of the room.

Nie Donghai and Nie Qian also followed him out.

The moment Li Fan stepped out of the room, he pointed in certain a direction, and said with a serious look on his face, "Over there! The fluctuations of space over there are totally abnormal! A spatial rift is forming!"

Nie Donghai and Nie Qian looked into the direction that Li Fan had pointed, and the three of them heard a loud noise coming from the air above Nie Tian's room.

"It's Little Tian's room!"

Nie Qian and Nie Donghai dashed over as fast as they could, panting heavily.

As Li Fan realized it was the room that Nie Tian had disappeared in, he instantly got very excited and great interest appeared on his face.

SHEW!

Li Fan flashed into action and beat Nie Qian and Nie Donghai to the scene.

When Nie Qian and Nie Donghai arrived moments later, Li Fan called out in a deep voice, "Don't step any closer!"

Members of the Nie clan had also perceived the anomaly and

were arriving from every direction.

Before long, more than a dozen Nie clan members had gathered around Nie Tian's room.

CRACKLE!

Under the crowd's gaze, Nie Tian's small stone residence suddenly filled with rifts.

One by one, bright rifts appeared, forming a crisscross network above the stone house, as if the space was being slit open by a knife.

Strange light surged out of the rifts, like meteors, and flashed across the unknown space inside the rifts.

The space in the surrounding area became extremely unstable and the magnetic field became disordered, all while colorful sparks kept splashing out of the spatial rifts.

The moment those sparks touched solid objects, they immediately exploded, creating violent shock waves.

BOOM!

Nie Tian's stone house finally exploded into fragments, and at the same time, those spatial rifts twisted and became more and more

unstable.

"Everyone back off!"

Li Fan was overwhelmed by the scene. With a loud shout, he warned the members of the Nie clan to immediately leave the vicinity of the site.

"Stay away! Everyone keep their distance!"

Nie Beichuan, who had just rushed to the site, also lost his composure and loudly warned the crowd.

Feeling the danger, the members of the Nie clan all vacated the vicinity upon Li Fan and Nie Beichuan's orders.

When they were about a hundred meters away, they felt somewhat safe, and thus turned around to refocus on the spatial disorder.

Several observant members of the Nie clan shouted out, their voices full of excitement and disbelief.

"Nie Tian!"

"It's Nie Tian!"



"Nie Tian is in the rubble!"

By that point, Nie Donghai and Nie Qian had also noticed that a figure of a child was rising to their feet within the pile of rubble.

Shockingly, that figure was Nie Tian!

Nie Tian stood up straight up in the debris of the house, his face full of bewilderment. It seemed he was still confused and disoriented, unsure of what was happening.

He raised his head, looking up at the twisting, wiggling spatial rifts above his head, then he subconsciously crouched down, fearing that he come into contact with those spatial rifts.

"Nobody move!" Li Fan warned in a loud voice as he stared at Nie Tian with burning eyes. "Nie Tian! You too. Stay where you are and don't move!"

"Okay," Nie Tian said with the nod of a head.

Li Fan took a deep breath before he took out a jade plaque and spoke excitedly into it, "Master! A spatial disruption zone has formed in the Nie clan!"

A dignified and awe-inspiring voice came from within the jade plaque. "Stay put! Don't do anything and I'll be there soon!"

Upon hearing the voice, everyone including Nie Donghai and Nie Beichuan was shocked.

They could distinctly tell the speaker was the master of the Cloudsoaring sect, Jiang Zhisu.

The Nie clan was merely one of the mortal clans that served the Cloudsoaring sect, and thus Jiang Zhisu had never visited.

Even as clanmasters, neither Nie Donghai nor Nie Beichuan had ever had the privilege to see Jiang Zhisu in person on the occasions during which they had visited the Cloudsoaring sect.

This time, Jiang Zhisu was actually going to come to the Nie clan personally. This news shocked every member of the clan.

"Everyone leave, except the clanmaster!" After pondering for a moment, Li Fan pointed to Nie Donghai. "You stay too. Everyone else leave! And keep your mouth shut about this! Don't you let out a word about the spatial disruption zone appearing in the Nie clan!"

"What are you waiting for?!" Nie Beichuan yelled. "Didn't you hear Mr. Li? Leave! Now!"

Upon his order, the crowd of Nie clan members who had gathered around the place left the scene, even though they still had many questions and doubts in their hearts.

Even Nie Qian, who had been worrying so much about Nie Tian, dragged her feet and left reluctantly upon Nie Donghai's urging.

After the crowd had all left, Li Fan spoke, his expression very serious. "This is a matter of great importance. My master is going to arrive soon. We'll wait for him here."

"I understand." Nie Donghai and Nie Beichuan didn't know what to do, but nodded their heads to indicate they understood.

However, just as they were waiting and preparing themselves to greet Jiang Zhisu, the mysterious spatial rifts that had appeared out of nowhere, gradually began to close up for no apparent reason.

"This is..." Nie Beichuan was shocked to his core.

In a very short period of time, all the spatial rifts had disappeared into thin air.

In addition, the distorted magnetic field slowly returned to normal, and the odd scenery in the sky also disappeared without leaving a trace.

"How could this be possible?" Li Fan was at a loss of words.

But seeing the spatial rifts vanish, Nie Donghai put on a joyful look.

Because he knew that meant Nie Tian were safe.

Cringing in the pile of rubble, Nie Tian couldn't stop thinking about how all the anomalies had been caused by the animal bone in his hand. "Spatial disruption zone, ripped-open space..."

He bowed his head low and wondered how he was going to explain all this, while his eyes glittered with a strange light. "The secrets of the animal bone must not be known! The mysteries of that mystical land must be gradually dug up by me and me alone!"

Soon, he made up his mind and came up with an explanation in his head.

## Chapter 28: The Sectmaster Visits!

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Even as Nie Tian was lost in thought, the angry roars of Nie Nanshan, Nie Kan, and the others rang out from off in the distance.

"Who dares to trespass in the Nie clan?"

"Stop!"

Li Fan's expression flickered briefly, as if he knew the anomalies here had attracted the attention of some powerful expert.

"Scram! You stupid guards!" The charming voice of a woman rose up the distance, and soon after that, a red-garbed figure suddenly appeared in front of them.

It was a tender and charming woman dressed in fiery red garments. Her earrings, the heart-shaped pendant hanging from her snow-white neck, and the bracelet on her slender jade arm all reflected precious lights of various colors.

She was incredibly beautiful to begin with, but with the addition of all the precious jewelry, she seemed even more graceful and elegant.

The moment the charming red-garbed woman landed and saw Li Fan of the Cloudsoaring sect, she couldn't help but grin. "Li Fan? Why are you here?"

Li Fan snorted. Sounding irritated, he replied, "This is the Nie clan, one of our subordinate clans. Isn't it normal for me to be here? This isn't the An clan. How come you've completely ignored the owner's defenses and barged in?"

Nie Tian was astounded as he subconsciously fixed his eyes on that charming woman in red. "An Shiyi?"

Having lived in Black Cloud City for so many years, he could instantly identify all of the powerful figures of the three major clans in Black Cloud City: the An clan, the Nie clan, and the Yun clan.

Over the years, the weakening of the Nie clan had allowed the comparative strength of the Yun clan to grow. Now they ranked second among the three major clans of Black Cloud City.

However, the An clan had always been the strongest, and it was they who managed the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion in Black Cloud City.

Just like the Cloudsoaring sect, the Spiritual Treasure sect was a powerful Qi warrior sect, and also the owner of the jewelry shop known as the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion. The An clan represented them in Black Cloud City.

According to the rumors, it was all because of An Shiyi that the An clan could maintain such a position in Black Cloud City.

Supposedly, the reason that the woman held such an important post in the Spiritual Treasure sect was that not only did she possess extraordinary power, but she was also very good at sect politics and had made numerous contributions to the Spiritual Treasure sect. Hence, she was highly regarded by the sectmaster.

Ever since she stepped out of the An clan and become an important figure in the Spiritual Treasure sect, she had scarcely visited Black Cloud City.

Nie Tian was surprised by the fact that one of the biggest names in Black Cloud City had suddenly showed up right there in front of him.

Feeling Nie Tian's gaze, An Shiyi intentionally ignored Li Fan. Instead, she immediately smiled at Nie Tian and threw him a flirtatious wink. "Am I pretty, young man?"

Nie Tian, who was about to walk out of the debris, was stunned for a moment. He took a closer look at An Shiyi, before he grinned and said, "Big sister, if I marry a woman in the future, I'll marry one exactly like you."

"Hahaha!" An Shiyi chuckled charmingly. "You've such a mouth on you! If I haven't married anyone by the time you've grown up, then I'll marry you."

"Okay!" Nie Tian didn't think before promising.

Nie Donghai stared blankly at Nie Tian, finding their conversation ridiculous and Nie Tian completely imprudent.

"Watch yourself!" Nie Beichuan said with a harrumph.

"Miss An!" Li Fan reminded her, "You haven't answered my question yet!"

An Shiyi still didn't bother to look at Li Fan. Instead she took out a crimson dagger from her pocket and threw it toward Nie Tian, saying with a flirtatious smile, "It's yours now!"

As the crimson dagger arced through the air toward him, it suddenly burst out in flames.

Nie Tian didn't dare to catch it. He let the dagger drop to the ground, and then waited for the flames to go out. Then he winked at An Shiyi and said, "Thank you for the token of love, big sister!"

"Hahaha! Such an interesting kid!" An Shiyi turned to Nie Donghai and smiled. "Consider that dagger my token of apology for trespassing into the Nie clan."

Nie Donghai's face turned grim. Shaking his head, he said, "I'm no longer the master of the Nie clan."

"Oh." An Shiyi gently nodded, and then began to mutter in a



voice that was completely audible to Nie Beichuan. "After so many secret moves, someone has finally got what he wanted. Unfortunately, I don't think he'll be able to keep his position for long. He's too narrow-minded..."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Nie Beichuan said angrily.

An Shiyi glanced at him with a face full of disdain and slowly said, "I meant that the Nie clan may never prosper again with you as their master."

"You!" Nie Beichuan fumed, his eyes glaring. However, in fear of An Shiyi's status, he didn't dare to do anything further.

"Alright, enough jokes." An Shiyi raised her eyebrow and finally looked over at Li Fan. Expression serious, she said, "Some things can not be hidden. I noticed the the strong fluctuations and the glaring spatial rifts from far away. Also, the magnetic field here is still obviously abnormal, so an unstable space disruption zone must have been formed here.

"Both you and I understand what it means when a space disruption zone is formed.

"If the Cloudsoaring sect intends to take it as their own and explore it by themselves, I'm afraid it won't be that easy!

"Anyone who sees it should have a share of it, so we, the Spiritual Treasure sect, demand our share!"

"This is the Nie clan!" Li Fan replied indignantly. "And the Nie clan belongs to us. Since the space disruption zone showed up here, it ought to belong to us, the Cloudsoaring sect!"

"The Nie clan is also a part of Black Cloud City," An Shiyi argued. "Since it showed up in Black Cloud City, the An clan should obviously have the right to part of it!"

As of this moment, Nie Tian had already extracted himself from the pile of rubble and walked over to Nie Donghai's side, holding the dagger An Shiyi had gifted him.

Nie Donghai didn't pay any attention to the quarrel between Li Fan and An Shiyi. Instead he pulled Nie Tian closer and asked in a low voice, "Are you okay?"

He didn't ask Nie Tian where he had been, but asked whether he was alright. Clearly, all he cared about was Nie Tian's safety.

"Grandpa, sorry for making you worry about me," Nie Tian replied quietly. "I'm fine."

Nie Donghai nodded and held back from asking any more questions, refocusing his attention on Li Fan and An Shiyi.

At this moment, the greetings of Nie Nanshan and other members of the Nie clan came from the distance.

"Sectmaster Jiang!"

"Greetings, sectmaster!"

Hearing that Jiang Zhisu had arrived, An Shiyi instantly stopped arguing with Li Fan, and her expression grew calm yet serious.

Nie Donghai turned to Nie Tian. Voice low, he said, "The sectmaster is here. Think twice before you speak." Nie Tian nodded.

In a few seconds, the green-garbed Jiang Zhisu, accompanied by Nie Nanshan, appeared right there in front of Nie Tian.

As the master of the Cloudsoaring sect, Jiang Zhisu appeared to be only around forty-years-old, with a righteous face and a plain expression that probably wouldn't change under any pressure or difficulty.

Looking over at An Shiyi, he calmly said, "So, you're here too, kiddo."

"Greetings, uncle Jiang." An Shiyi smoothed away all her sharp edges when facing him and pretended to be modest and virtuous. "I happened to be in Black Cloud City when I sensed the changes caused by the spatial rifts appearing in the Nie clan. That's why I decided to come over and see what was going on."

After pondering for a moment, she continued, "Before I arrived, I

didn't expect your honorable disciple Li Fan to be here. I was worried that members of the Nie clan wouldn't understand the dangers of the spatial rifts, and might make unadvised moves to hurt themselves. I'm only here to help.

"Fortunately, the space disruption zone wasn't fully formed. Apparently my worries were unfounded."

After hearing her explanation, Jiang Zhisu nodded. "I also happened to overhear what you just said to Li Fan. If a space disruption zone were to be completely formed in this place, our Cloudsoaring sect would surely invite the Spiritual Treasure sect to explore it with us."

"Thank you, uncle Jiang." An Shiyi bowed to express her gratitude, and then she smiled at Nie Donghai. "Sorry to have disturbed you."

After finishing these words, she winked at Nie Tian again and then left without a moment's hesitation.

It seemed all she had been waiting for was Jiang Zhisu's promise. After getting it, she simply walked out of the Nie clan, her mind settled.

Jiang Zhisu looked at Li Fan and asked, "Tell me what you've seen, and don't leave out any details."

Li Fan held nothing back, thoroughly explaining all the

anomalies that he had witnessed in the Nie clan.

After he finished, Jiang Zhisu closed his eyes in thought for a while. Then he suddenly turned to Nie Tian and ordered, "This child stays. All the other members of the Nie clan may leave us for now."

Upon his order, Nie Donghai and his two brothers all bowed and then left, each with their own thoughts.

After all of them were gone, Jiang Zhisu gazed at Nie Tian and asked with a warm tone, "Child, I heard that you disappeared for ten days. Where were you during that time?"

Nie Tian took a breath and answered with a serious face, "Ten days ago, some similar spatial rifts appeared just like they did today. Then, I was sucked into one of them..."

"Sucked into it?" A strange light flashed in Jiang Zhisu's eyes. "Then what? What did you see? And how did you come back?"

Nie Tian described everything with a fascinated look on his face, as if he were immersed in a dream. "I saw a sky full of dazzling lights, as if there were countless meteors flying past me. It seemed like a magnificent dreamland, with sparks of light everywhere, and raining meteors of various colors. It felt like I stayed there for a long time, but at the same time it also felt like I was there only for a short while.

"Then, for unknown reasons, I was dragged out and returned to the Nie clan.

"I would've never expected that ten days would have passed. It's all so weird."

Nie Tian had confusion written across his face, as if he truly had no idea of what had happened to him.

Jiang Zhisu looked at him and listened to his story carefully. After quite a while, he nodded and gently said, "Alright, you may go to your grandfather now."

Nie Tian awkwardly mimicked Nie Donghai's previous actions, bowing towards Jiang Zhisu, and then left.

"Master, do you think the child told the truth?" Li Fan asked.

Jiang Zhisu's expression didn't change at all. "No."

"That little punk dared to lie to you?" Li Fan said angrily. "I'll call him back right now!"

Jiang Zhisu shook his head, a strange look in his eyes. It seemed he also felt that Nie Tian had some guts. "It doesn't matter if he was telling the truth. What matters the most is that something extraordinary indeed happened to him, right here."

"If we don't find out the truth, what should we do next?" Li Fan said indignantly.

Jiang Zhisu rubbed his chin in thought and added, "If it really was a space disruption zone that was on its way to being formed, it will show itself in the future. If it wasn't, then... there has to be something unusual about that child. I actually hope it was the child."

"What?!" Li Fan said, puzzled.

Jiang Zisu continued to explain, profound meaning filling his words, "Someone in our sect has already spotted him. Sooner or later, Nie Tian will be admitted into the Cloudsoaring sect. If it really was something on him that triggered the change, then after he becomes a disciple of our sect, he will naturally be a powerful asset. In the following period of time, you will stay in the Nie clan and see whether any more anomalies occur."

"I understand," said Li Fan.

## Chapter 29: Strike With Another's Power

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After bidding farewell to Jiang Zhisu, Nie Tian calmly went to find Nie Donghai.

A large number of Nie clan members were gathered at one of their major pavilions. Not only were Nie Donghai and his brothers there, but even members of the second generation were there, including Nie Qian and Nie Kan.

The moment Nie Tian arrived, he discovered that his grandfather looked rather grim and Nie Qian's face was full of grievances. It appeared that they had been arguing with Nie Beichuan.

Nie Kan turned his head and saw Nie Tian coming their way, and then immediately announced, "Nie Tian is here."

In a instant, all gazes were fixed upon Nie Tian.

"Nie Tian, has sectmaster Jiang left?" Nie Nanshan asked.

"Yeah." Nie Tian nodded. "He asked me a few questions, talked to Mr. Li, and then left."

Hearing that Jiang Zhisu had left, every member of the Nie clan seemed to have a huge burden lifted off their shoulders and suddenly felt relieved.



Jiang Zhisu was so widely respected and feared by the Nie clan that whenever he was around, nobody even dared to speak in loud voice.

"What did the sectmaster ask you?" Nie Beichuan said with a straight face.

Nie Tian didn't hesitate a bit to repeat Jiang Zhisu's questions and how he answered.

"You were sucked into a spatial rift and somehow magically returned to our clan?" Nie Beichuan had a strange look on his face, and was staring at Nie Tian with doubtful eyes, as if he hoped to find a loophole in the story from Nie Tian's expression alone.

Under his gaze, Nie Tian didn't say a word, and actually appeared quite composed.

After gazing for a while, Nie Beichuan failed to find anything, then suddenly said, "The dagger An Shiyi gave you was a token of apology for trespassing on the Nie clan's property, thus it should be turned over to the storehouse."

Nie Donghai let out a cold harrumph. "Second brother!"

Nie Qian also angrily said, "She clearly stated that it was a gift to Little Tian, so it should belong to Little Tian. Why should he turn it in?"

Nie Tian went blank for a moment. However it only took a moment before he realized what Nie Qian had been arguing with Nie Beichuan about.

Nie Beichuan raised his voice and held his head high, glancing around at certain other clan members. "I am the master of the Nie clan! An Shiyi must atone for barging into the Nie clan's property regardless of our defenses, and she said herself that the dagger in Nie Tian's hand was the atonement!"

The majority of the clan members who he looked at chimed in.

"The clanmaster is right."

"It's a reasonable solution."

"It's only fair!"

Only a small percentage of clan members seemed to support Nie Donghai. But knowing Nie Beichuan's power has been gradually increasing, even if they were dissatisfied inside, not a single one of them dared to speak up.

Nie Qian bit her lip, her bright eyes filled with rage and resentment.

Nie Donghai was utterly disappointed in the clan members. He sighed and prepared to persuade Nie Tian to hand over the dagger.

"Just now..." Nie Tian gradually lifted his dagger-holding hand and while smiling said, "After answering sectmaster Jiang's questions, I took out the dagger, told him it didn't belong to me, and said that I wanted to hand it over to Mr. Li.

"However, sectmaster Jiang said that since it was gifted to me, I should keep it and protect it, not letting down An Shiyi's good intentions.

"But..." He halted briefly, and looked at Nie Beichuan. "Since the clanmaster says the dagger needs to be turned in, I'll turn it in."

With these words, he spread open his hand, waiting for Nie Ping, the person in charge of the storehouse, to come and collect it.

However, right after he finished his comments, those clan members who previously clamored and demanded him to hand over the dagger, suddenly all shut up.

Even Nie Beichuan had various expressions flashing across his face.

The truth was that he couldn't tell whether Nie Tian was telling the truth.

If it was true, and Jiang Zhisu really had said those words, then he... absolutely didn't dare to contradict his will.

Not to mention that Jiang Zhisu had already left; even if he was still in the Nie clan, Nie Beichuan wouldn't dare to go to him to verify Nie Tian's claim.

He even wouldn't want to seek proof from Li Fan, in case Li Fan might think less of him.

The dagger almost immediately became a bit of an eyesore to him.

Nie Beichuan remained silent with an unreadable expression. Nie Tian raised his hand and waved the crimson dagger, shouting, "Uncle Nie Ping?"

Nie Ping was one of Nie Beichuan's trusted aides. Recently, he had deliberately set up obstacles for Nie Qian when she traded for flamecloud gems, and had deducted many flamecloud gems from Nie Qian's transactions.

However, when Nie Tian simply stood there waiting for him to collect the dagger, he suddenly didn't know what to do.

He couldn't help but looked timidly at Nie Beichuan.

Seeing that Nie Ping didn't dare to collect it, Nie Tian voluntarily stepped forward and shoved it into his hands with a smile. "Here you go. Later, I'll go tell Mr. Li that I've turned that dagger over to the Nie clan's storehouse. After all, I'm too young, and how unseemly would it be if I were to hold such a high-ranked spiritual

tool, right?"

Even though he didn't know much about the ranking system of spiritual tools, he knew that this dagger from An Shiyi was an extraordinary object.

"What? No!" The moment Nie Ping heard that Nie Tian was going to inform Li Fan, he shivered with terror. It was as if the dagger had suddenly turned into a scalding hot item of trouble. Without any hesitation, he shoved it back into Nie Tian's hands as fast as he could.

Then, he turned and looked at Nie Beichuan with a helpless look on his face, as if he were about to cry.

Nie Beichuan was also shocked by Nie Tian's action. He took a deep look at Nie Tian, and with no other choice, he said, "Since sectmaster Jiang told you to keep it, then you'd better take good care of it."

"Oh, alright then," Nie Tian said indifferently. "Thanks a lot, clanmaster."

Before, he had always addressed Nie Beichuan as "second grandpa", but after Nie Beichuan had assumed clanmaster, he became more and more excessive. Thus, he no longer addressed Nie Beichuan that way, but rather called him "clanmaster", as an outsider would.

In Nie Tian's heart, Nie Beichuan no longer deserve to be called "grandpa".

Nie Donghai let out a cold harrumph. "Can we go now?"

Nie Beichuan didn't say a word.

Nie Donghai then turned to Nie Tian and said, "Let's go. You stay with me for the next few days."

As they spoke, Nie Donghai led Nie Tian away, towards the quiet stone pavilion that he currently lived in. Holding her chin high, Nie Qian caught up with them, feeling quite content.

After arriving at the stone pavilion, Nie Donghai closed the door before he stroking Nie Tian's head affectionately. Smiling, he said, "Smart kid."

Nie Tian laughed softly, well aware that Nie Donghai had seen through his trick of deliberately pressuring Nie Beichuan with Jiang Zhisu.

Nie Qian was eager to ask Nie Tian what had happened during the past ten days. "Little Tian, during the time you were gone..."

Nie Donghai threw her a fierce glare, stopping her from finishing her question. Then, he led them to the study, where he grabbed a brush pen and started to write rapidly on a piece of paper.

On the paper, Nie Donghai wrote with vigorous strokes, "Never tell anyone about what you've actually experienced or witnessed over the past ten days. With the sectmaster's cultivation base, even though we are five thousand meters apart, he is still able to hear every single word you say if he wants to. This includes even your whispers! Plus, we don't have the ability to seal off our voices."

Seeing these words, Nie Qian suddenly became vigilant, and didn't dare to say another word.

Nie Tian also gently nodded his head.

As of this moment, he realized that, compared to his grandfather, Nie Beichuan had been extremely stupid.

Since Jiang Zhisu was able to overhear their conversations from far away, he could also hear what Nie Beichuan had said to Nie Tian as long as he wanted to.

As intelligent and experienced as Jiang Zhisu was, it was very likely that he had secretly paid attention and got truthful answers to his questions.

Perhaps, Jiang Zhisu was eavesdropping on their conversation right now...

Nie Beichuan didn't realize this, and thus acted narrow-mindedly. If Jiang Zhisu did hear his words, it would undoubtedly

have left Jiang Zhisu with a sour taste in his mouth.

In fact, it had.

At this very moment, outside Black Cloud City, Jiang Zhisu smiled to himself. "What a smart boy."

After these words, he waited no more. Blurring into action, he flew towards the Cloudsoaring Mountain like a red bolt of lightning.

It was impossible for him to waste too much energy on the Nie clan.

Since he couldn't easily determine what had truly occurred, he could only leave temporarily and dig up the truth bit by bit in the future.



## Chapter 30: Li Fan's Incitement!

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Li Fan spent the following three months in the Nie clan, observing the area where the spatial rifts had opened up.

Unfortunately, after three months of waiting, Li Fan failed to witness any reappearances.

However, the news of a space disruption zone appearing in the Nie clan quietly spread throughout the whole of Black Cloud City. Quite a few foreign Qi warriors began to show up, one after another, to wander the perimeter of the Nie clan.

Because Li Fan had been staying in the Nie clan, Nie Donghai and Nie Qian seldom went to talk to Nie Tian. They intentionally showed little interest in Nie Tian's situation.

Both of them understood that as long as Li Fan was in the Nie clan, any conversations they had with Nie Tian would very likely be overheard.

Nie Tian himself understood the degree of complexity of the situation. For three whole months, he spent most of his time in his residence, not daring to further study the profundity of the one punch he had learned from that mysterious land.

He was worried that Li Fan might pick up on some inkling of the matter from the most subtle details.

Meanwhile, inside the An clan...

Three Qi warriors from the Spiritual Treasure sect returned from the Nie Family very late at night to find An Shiyi.

They were led by a short, chubby fellow named Qiu Heng, whose face was filled with a warm, perpetual smile. He was An Shiyi's martial uncle, and he knew a thing or two about the mysteries of spatial force.

After a moment of pondering, Qiu Heng said, "Kiddo, that space disruption zone hasn't showed up again for three months. During that time, I secretly approached and investigated the area, but found no anomalies of space movement. In my opinion, I'm afraid it was an accident and another space disruption zone will probably not appear."

One of his companions added, "We've taken turns and waited for three months now. We can assure you that nothing abnormal has occurred in that area during this time."

The three of them had been taking shifts to closely watch the Nie clan. If any anomalies popped up, they would have definitely caught them.

After such a long time, with not even the slightest of unusual activities occurring, they had privately begun to believe that spatial disorder which appeared in the Nie Family was perhaps merely an accident.

Each of them were in high posts and had important duties in the Spiritual Treasure sect, thus it was impossible for them to stay for an extended duration in Black Cloud City.

Finding An Shiyi today and making these comments, they clearly intended to leave.

“It seems we need to think about things from a different angle.” The curvaceous and alluring An Shiyi sank back into the soft couch. With one hand propping up her delicate chin and her beautiful eyes glimmering with intelligence, she smiled and said, “There’s a child from the Nie clan called Nie Tian, who mysteriously disappeared for ten days before the incident had occurred. During the ten days he was gone, the Cloudsoaring sect put in a surprisingly concerted effort to find him. Even Li Fan himself pulled a lot of strings.

“Both the Yun clan and the Yuan clan were turned upside down.

“This is no coincidence.”

“I got to the site immediately after detecting the abnormal fluctuations in the Nie clan, and that kid instantly caught my eyes.

“At first I didn’t know that he was the same Nie Tian who had disappeared for ten days.

“After vanishing for ten days with no explanation, he happened to reappear in the Nie clan exactly when space was ripped open. I

have reason to believe that he must have entered a mysterious dimension through a spatial rift.

“What’s more, living creatures can obviously remain alive within the dimension. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have been able to make it back alive.”

With these words, An Shiyi suddenly recalled her conversation with Nie Tian in the Nie clan three months ago, and couldn’t help but snort with laughter.

The three powerful Qi warriors from the Spiritual Treasure sect had originally been focused on her speculations. However, the dim room seemed to be suddenly lit up by her sweet and charming chuckle.

As they watched An Shiyi, they appeared to have somewhat drifted off and momentarily lost themselves in her astonishing charm.

Qiu Heng was the first to regain his senses. Glaring at her, he rebuked, “Quit playing and finish what you’re saying!”

An Shiyi stuck out her tongue, smiled, and said, “Since nothing unusual has happened in the Nie clan, perhaps we should focus on that kid Nie Tian and figure out where he had been during the ten days that he was missing.

“I have a hunch that the the abnormal activity in the Nie clan is

most likely related to that kid.”

“You think it was caused by the boy?” Qiu Heng’s expression flickered, as if he were considering something. He nodded and said, “It’s indeed a possibility. Some people with special inner attributes, or those who possesses miraculous items, could indeed trigger a disorder of space. But that kid... is merely a teenager. With such a low cultivation base, could he have truly caused something like that?”

“Martial uncle, please stay for a few more days,” An Shiyi pleaded. “I’ll make a plan and set something up to see if we can get the truth from Nie Tian.”

Qiu Heng nodded in agreement. “Okay then.”

An abrupt appearance of an unknown space disruption zone was of great significance, which could possibly change the destiny of a Qi warrior’s sect.

Due to this reason, upon hearing about the anomaly in the Nie clan, they had rushed from the Spiritual Treasure sect to this location, hoping to get a share of the profits from the hands of the Cloudsoaring sect.

Having discovered no trace of any unusual activities after waiting for three months, they were rather embarrassed to report back to the sect leaders, therefore they would rather help An Shiyi carry out her new plan.

...

At the same time, back in the Nie clan, Nie Kan anxiously barged into Nie Beichuan's ice-cold cultivation chamber with a grim look on his face. Apparently, he didn't care at all that it was the dead of night. "Father! Something big has happened!"

"What's wrong?" Nie Beichuan let out a mouthful of frost mist, looking somewhat irritated by the sudden intrusion. "Why the panic? What happened exactly? Li Fan is here, isn't he? He wouldn't just sit around and let things get out of control."

Nie Kan continued, "I just got the news that after months of relentless hard work, we've finally clear the blockage and reopened the mine."

"Isn't it supposed to be a good news?" Nie Beichuan asked, confused.

The lifeline of the entire Nie clan lay in the flamecloud gem mine. After the last collapse, they had taken advantage of the opportunity and forced Nie Xiang to abdicate, arranging for another clan elder on their side to manage the mine exploitation.

That clan elder hired a huge amount of laborers from Black Cloud City to clear the fallen stones in the mine, in order to exhibit his capability.

It should have taken longer to clear up the blocked mine, but it

was reopened ahead of time under their unrelenting efforts.

“The thing is... apparently there are no more flamecloud gems in the mine!” Nie Kan’s voice trembled slightly.

Nie Beichuan sprung to his feet and yelled, “It’s impossible! Not long ago, the Cloudsoaring sect sent a Qi warrior, an expert in mineral surveying, to examine that mine. According to him, with our mining speed, we should be able to continue mining for another several decades. How could he have been mistaken?”

Expression bitter, Nie Kan said, “They performed a thorough investigation, but couldn’t find even one more flamecloud gem.”

“Impossible! How could that be possible?!” Nie Beichuan appeared to be at a complete loss.

He clearly knew the only reason the Nie clan was accepted and sheltered by the Cloudsoaring sect over the years was that they had always mined for the Cloudsoaring sect.

If the Nie clan were to lose the mine, they would very likely be abandoned by the Cloudsoaring sect, and thus lose their protection.

It would be extremely hard for a clan to maintain its foothold in Black Cloud City without someone to rely on. At that time, the An clan and the Yun clan would be able to treat the Nie clan without the slightest scruple.

Nie Beichuan panicked. “Lock down this news temporarily. I need to personally visit the mine to confirm whether or not it’s true!”

The next day...

After realizing that he was waiting in vain, Li Fan decided to leave. He didn’t talk to Nie Beichuan before he left, but instead he went to Nie Donghai’s small, five-floored pavilion.

Upon arrival, he also had Nie Donghai call Nie Tian to the first floor.

Soon after, Nie Tian came down from the third floor and saluted Li Fan, “Greetings, Mr. Li.”

Li Fan seemed a bit unhappy, and yet he said, “No need to be so courteous. Call me uncle Li from now on.” Ever since learning from his master Jiang Zhisu that Nie Tian had dared to spin such a huge lie to his master, he had always considered him to be a little punk full of vile tricks.

Therefore, seeing Nie Tian again, he couldn’t help but hold a little grudge against him. He naturally put on a long face.

“Very well,” Nie Tian replied obediently. “Uncle Li.”



Li Fan didn't spare Nie Donghai a glance. He stared at Nie Tian and said, "It's been three months. There still haven't been any unusual or special activities. I can't stay in the Nie clan permanently, so I'll return to the Cloudsoaring sect today. You were pulled into that space rift, so some level of panic and confusion are inevitable. Perhaps some things slipped your mind due to excessive fear..."

After pausing for a moment, he continued, "If you ever remember anything, you can always come to the Cloudsoaring sect and tell me."

"I've said all that I can say," Nie Tian replied in a low voice.

"Really?"

"Yeah, really."

Li Fan's mouth twitched. After a moment of thought, he suddenly burst into laughter. "Well then. I won't burden you with more questions today. If you think of anything in the future, remember to come find me in the Cloudsoaring sect."

"If you remember something that turns out to help the Cloudsoaring sect, it will be considered an act of meritorious service on your part."

"You know that we've always been generous towards those who make huge contributions. With such a significant contribution,

you won't have to wait till you are fifteen or till you reach the ninth level of Qi Refining; you would be directly accepted by the Cloudsoaring sect and become a true disciple!"

Upon these words, Nie Donghai's eyes suddenly lit up. Nie Tian's heart was also secretly shaken.

Becoming a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect had always been the ultimate goal for the young generation of the Nie clan, and Nie Tian was no exception.

Li Fan's remarks made him understand that all the so-called rules were completely subject to the interpretation of the rule makers!

For decades, reaching the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of fifteen had been the condition for the Cloudsoaring sect to accept children of the Nie clan as their disciples.

Members of the Nie clan had never dared to even think about breaking the rule.

However, as the rule makers, the Cloudsoaring sect could change the rules that had been around for decades and immediately make him a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect, all with a few mere words!

Truth be told, such incitement... was extremely appealing to him!

Seeing that both Nie Donghai and Nie Tian were tempted, Li Fan

chuckled and added, “Not only that. If your contribution was great enough, I can assure you that your grandfather will be made head of the Nie clan again! Even your grandfather’s injuries are not completely incurable. Because of you, your grandfather may regain the hope of making a breakthrough in his cultivation!”

Upon hearing these words, the gaunt Nie Donghai briefly quivered, and his eyes glittered with the light of hope.

# Chapter 31: Unswayed

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To break the rules and directly become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect!

To help his grandfather reclaim the position of clanmaster; to fully heal his injuries and give him the chance to continue treading path of cultivation!

What Li Fan had offered was so appealing to Nie Tian that he was on the verge of revealing the truth in exchange for all the benefits.

However, just when he was going to open his mouth, he suddenly thought of the miracles within that miraculous world.

The eight huge fire dragons, the ancient, dilapidated altar, and the giant arms that pointed to the heavens were all extremely fascinating, and had been haunting his mind day and night.

He had the vague feeling that, compared to the wonders of that mysterious world, Li Fan's offer was not even worth mentioning.

However, Nie Tian couldn't bear to see Nie Donghai keep struggling in his current state, with injuries that had been dragging him down for years. He wanted to relieve his grandfather of his miseries by telling the truth.

He ached over the tough choice, and couldn't help but look over at Nie Donghai, as if begging to be rescued.

He noticed that Nie Donghai had taken in a deep breath to calm himself, and was now wearing an unwavering expression.

“What? Did you remember something?” Li Fan threw an inciting glance at Nie Tian while simultaneously thinking to himself, “How can a little kid like you not be moved by such temptations?”

He truly believed Nie Tian was about to spill the truth.

“No, I didn’t remember anything.” Nie Tian shook his head bitterly. “Perhaps I’ll think of something in the future. Once I do, I’ll definitely go find you, uncle Li.”

“Little bastard!” Li Fan cursed in his heart. Finally giving up, he said, “Ok, never mind. You’d better take care of yourself and be extra careful. If you’re abducted again, we’d have to send out a lot of people to look for you all over the world again.”

With these words, Li Fan didn’t pause for a second before leaving.

After he stepped out of the gate, Nie Donghai looked Nie Tian in the eye, signaling for him to remain silent for the moment.

A quarter-hour later, when Nie Donghai was convinced that Li Fan was long gone, he finally said, “We’re good now.”

Nie Tian felt guilty and was eager to explain. “Grandfather, I...”

Nie Donghai waved his hand and said, “You’re no longer a child. I trust your judgement. Considering you didn’t tell Li Fan the truth, I can well imagine that the wonders you encountered must have been beyond my imagination.”

Nie Tian bowed his head and said in a low voice, “I feel like if I make full use of my miraculous encounters, then even if I can’t enter the Cloudsoaring sect, I should be able to make extraordinary achievements. I also believe that someday, I can personally help you reclaim the position of clanmaster and heal your injuries.

Nie Donghai was deeply moved. More certain than ever that Nie Tian had experienced some very unusual encounters, he said, “From now on, you have to seal that secret up tight! Don’t reveal it to anyone before you are strong enough to keep it safe personally! Including me! And your aunt!”

Nie Tian nodded his head resolutely. “I understand.”

He secretly vowed that in the future he would make up for the things Nie Donghai had missed because of him keeping the secrets of that mysterious world. In fact, he would pay him back in double.

At that moment, Nie Qian walked in with a pink envelope in her hand, and stared at Nie Tian with a strange expression. Turning to Nie Donghai, she said, “Father, the An clan has sent us a letter. I can’t believe that An Shiyi wants to invite Little Tian to their

clan.”

“An Shiyi?” Nie Donghai frowned and said, “Tell the messenger that Nie Tian has fallen ill, and he won’t be able to leave his residence.”

“Okay.” Nie Qian nodded her head and glared at Nie Tian. “Well this is what you get when you try your hand at flirting when so young! Happy now? It won’t be long before that temptress comes knocking.”

Nie Tian smiled embarrassedly, lowering his gaze.

“Nonsense!” Nie Donghai harrumphed coldly. “That girl never does things without planning ahead. Considering how she rose up in Black Cloud City, and managed to become so popular in the Spiritual Treasure sect, what do you think she’s been relying on?”

Before Nie Qian could open her mouth, Nie Donghai grimaced and continued, “After failing to observe another anomaly, she must want to dig into Little Tian and ask where he was during the ten days he went missing.”

Nie Qian was also curious about the truth. “I noticed that Mr. Li just left, so...”

“From now on, you aren’t allowed to ask any more questions regarding that matter!” Nie Donghai said sternly.

“Fine,” Nie Qian replied, clearly not very happy.

“Go respond to the An clan.” After instructing her to leave, Nie Donghai turned back to Nie Tian and said, “Remember, stay away from An Shiyi. She is the most terrifying character in Black Cloud City. Several years ago, the Yun clan attempted to challenge the An clan’s position in Black Cloud City. The results were that a large number of them were either killed or severely injured.

“From what I know, most of those members of the Yun clan died by her hands.

“Her path to the Spiritual Treasure sect was also soaked in blood. That woman never shows mercy. She has even killed more than a few Qi warriors of the Spiritual Treasure sect.

“You might not know it, but after she returned to Black Cloud City, the Yun clan suddenly became obedient again. Compared to her, Yuan Qiuying is nothing.”

From the way he talked, it was obvious that Nie Donghai feared An Shiyi, and was worried that Nie Tian might unwittingly offend her.

Nie Tian was secretly shocked. “I’ll do as you say.”

He knew that An Shiyi was fierce, but he didn’t expect her to be so fierce that even his grandfather considered her to be the most terrifying character in Black Cloud City.



Nie Donghai tousled his hair and said, "Alright. No need to worry too much. In that woman's eyes, you, and in fact the entire Nie clan, are nobodies. And after all, we have the Cloudsoaring sect to back us. As long as you stay in our clan, she will have to give face to the Cloudsoaring sect, and won't dare to act recklessly. Li Fan is gone. You don't need to be so cautious from now on. Why don't you try and study the dagger An Shiyi gave you? Plus... whatever matters you were avoiding earlier, you may try and engage with them now."

After making these comments, he seemed to have remembered something all of a sudden, so he added meaningfully, "However, it would be better if strange things like spatial rifts do not reappear in our clan ever again, so that we could avoid new troubles."

"I understand." Nie Tian clearly understood what his grandfather meant.

"You may take your leave now." Nie Donghai waved his hand.

Nie Tian immediately went back to the third floor.

During the past three months, he had feared that Li Fan might notice something, hence he didn't dare to touch the animal bone.

He even didn't dare to take the liberty to touch the dagger An Shiyi had given him as a gift, which according to Nie Donghai was a Medium grade spiritual tool.

Spiritual tools were divided into five grades: Elementary, Medium, Premium, Spirit Channeling, and Immortal. There were seven levels in each grade.

Cultivation bases of Qi warriors were divided into ten stages: Qi Refining, Lesser Heaven, Heaven, Greater Heaven, Mortal, Mystery, Soul, Void, Saint, and God.

Normally speaking, a Qi warrior of the Qi Refining stage or Lesser Heaven stage would be able to fully exhibit their power with a Elementary grade spiritual tool.

A Qi warrior should at least reach the Heaven stage to be able to fully display the power of a medium grade spiritual tool.

In the entire Nie clan, Medium grade spiritual tools were extremely rare.

That was the reason why Nie Beichuan didn't care about losing face and demanded the dagger when he realized that what An Shiyi had gifted was a Medium grade spiritual tool.

"A Medium grade spiritual tool," Nie Tian murmured. "That woman... was indeed generous with treasures."

He took out the forearm-length crimson dagger, stroking his finger down the shiny, smooth surface and trying to use his spiritual power to trigger it to change.

BZZ!BZZ!

One after another, thin but dense threads of crimson flame instantly appeared from the dagger.

As the crimson dagger released flame energy, its tip started to emanate powerful flames!

By this point, the animal bone in his waist pocket seemed to have suddenly started to interact with the dagger, and became scorching hot.

Nie Tian couldn't bear the heat and took the animal bone out from his waist pocket.

A strange attractive force was suddenly generated around the animal bone, as Nie Tian could clearly see the originally straight strings of light emanating from the tip of the dagger being bent into arches and trapped by the animal bone.

In the next moment, he saw the strings of red light emanating from the tip of the dagger being absorbed.

Dense strands of crimson flame were vanishing from the sides of the dagger at a speed that could be seen by the naked eye.

Soon the previously mysterious dagger was reduced to an

ordinary item, dark and completely lifeless.

PUFF!

At last, a strange sound came from within the dagger, as if some restrictive spell were completely destroyed.

At the same time.

An Shiyi received the message that Nie Donghai explicitly rejected her invitation on behalf of Nie Tian.

PUFF!

A strange sound that was identical to that of the one emitted by the dagger rang out from something within her sleeves, and she couldn't help but make a "Hum?!" sound.

"The Nie clan is so poor and weak now, so they definitely wouldn't destroy a medium grade spiritual tool for no reason. The Crimson Sun Dagger was in that kid's hands, and now it is completely destroyed. This is interesting.

"I am truly intrigued."

# Chapter 32: A Style Of Punching!

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“It’s destroyed...”

Inside the room, Nie Tian stared blankly at the dagger, which was already dark, lifeless, and drained of spirit. He suddenly felt somewhat depressed.

There were only a few spiritual tools of Medium grade in the entire Nie clan. His grandfather used to have one, but he sold it at a low price several years ago, and used the money to try to find a cure for his disease.

Nie Tian also understood that the only reason An Shiyi had generously gifted him this Medium grade spiritual tool was that Jiang Zhisu had been present at that time.

It was such a precious item, and he had lost it to the animal bone before he could properly explore its secrets.

Glaring at the animal bone with intense hatred, he couldn’t hold back from cursing. “What a waste! What a waste!”

BZZZ!

Little fragmented flames started to spark in the animal bone, swiftly gathering in its center, and then rushing towards the drop of crimson blood.

“Yee?!” He exclaimed as he pressed his finger on the animal bone, which had become scalding hot again. He quickly discovered that the shrunk drop of blood was now growing larger again.

He immediately understood that he had just replenished the energy of the animal bone, which had been consumed when it split space and brought him to that mysterious land.

“It won’t trigger another spatial disorder, will it?” he thought nervously.

Li Fan had spent three whole months waiting for another spatial rift to open up. Now, even though Li Fan was gone, there were still numerous unidentified Qi warriors wandering about outside of the Nie clan.

All of them had gathered there because of the unusual spatial fluctuations that emerged in the Nie clan.

If another spatial rift reappeared in the Nie clan now that Li Fan had returned to the Cloudsoaring Mountain, those Qi warriors would probably rush into the Nie clan and explore the secrets of the spatial disorder, regardless of the price they might end up paying.

As powerful as they were, the Nie clan would be totally incapable of stopping them, and the secrets to his animal bone might also be exposed in the process.

He pressed his finger closely on the animal bone, calling out in his heart and praying for nothing to happen. “Don’t! Please don’t!”

Although he wished to visit that mysterious land again to explore its profound secrets, this wasn’t the time. Once the animal bone caused a spatial disorder, he would immediately fall into a maelstrom of huge troubles.

As the animal bone grew hotter and hotter, it almost seemed as if it could hear his inner cries.

The change he feared might happen didn’t occur. After converging all the flame power from the Crimson Sun Dagger into the drop of blood, the animal bone once again became quiet.

As anxious as he was, Nie Tian didn’t dare to probe the drop of blood with his spiritual awareness, therefore he quickly put it back into his waist pocket.

After a while, when not a single bit of heat was emanating from the animal bone, and no change had occurred, he felt a bit of relief.

Then he frowned deeply. “This won’t do,” he thought. “As long as I’m in the Nie clan, I won’t be able to freely explore the wonders of the animal bone. I have to think of an alternative.”

However, after thinking long and hard, he failed to come up with a good solution.

He was still too young, and his cultivation base was merely in the sixth level of Qi Refining. Between Black Cloud City and the Cloudsoaring Mountain was a vast and dense forest, and Qi warriors from the Cloudsoaring sect or Black Cloud City constantly roamed it. If he triggered an unusual spatial disorder, those powerful Qi warriors would very likely notice.

If he were then found by the Qi warriors from the Cloudsoaring sect, he would probably be safe; however the mysterious item on him would undoubtedly be hard to keep concealed.

If it were Qi warriors from the An clan or the Yun clan that found him, he doubted that he would return to the Nie clan alive.

Furthermore, there were spirit beasts constantly foraging in the wild lands to the north of Black Cloud City. Exploring the secrets of the animal bone there would ensure that his chances of getting killed would be even higher.

“After all, I’m not strong enough...” After pondering for awhile, he decided that leaving Black Cloud City and entering the desolate and uninhabited land would not be a wise idea. Hence, he had to give it up for the time being.

“For now, I’ll try to grasp the essence of that fist strike. I’ll wait until I’m powerful enough, then I’ll go out of Black Cloud City to explore the miracles of the animal bone.”

With these thoughts, he adjusted his breathing and tossed any thoughts of the animal bone out of his head. After calming down,



he tried to fill his heart with rage.

All of a sudden, a force of anger and frenzy, as well as a begrudging mood, started to build up in his heart.

As he recalled the gesture of the giant hand reaching into the heavens, he gradually lifted his arm and pointed to the ceiling, imitating the gesture.

After his wrath was accumulated to a certain degree and his eyes seemed to be filled with burning flame of rage, he suddenly felt the spiritual power in his dantian's spiritual sea flowing uncontrollably towards his own raised arm.

ROOOAARRRR!!

He couldn't help but howling out loud as a force of rage poured into his meridians and converged into his spiritual power.

A wild and ancient aura was released from his body. As of this moment, it seemed as if he had suddenly become the reincarnation of an ancient giant spirit, full of the courage to battle against the heaven and earth.

The spiritual power violently rushed into his fist. An intense urge to unleash the wild and uncontrollable power spurred him to explode into action!

He sensed that he had to let off the furious spiritual power

fluctuations gathered in his fist!

His clenched fist violently smashed down on the stone table in front of him, and all of the suppressed power instantly found an outlet.

CRACKLE!

All of a sudden, the door-sized table was shattered into small pieces, and the fragmented stones shot out in every direction, filling the entire room.

After the blow, he was surprised to discover that he was completely drained of spiritual power!

The spiritual power in his spiritual sea appeared to be emptied, not leaving a slightest bit!

Totally depleted of strength, he collapsed to the ground and his face grew pale due to overexertion.

He was surrounded by countless shattered stones. After his strike was complete, the larger stones continued the process of fracturing, breaking up into even smaller pieces.

The room was filled with the intense emotion of rage which he had attached to his fist!

It wasn't until some time had passed that the rage finally dissipated into the heaven and earth.

Looking at stone fragments falling to the floor and the gravel-filled room, Nie Tian let out a bellow of rage. "What a violent power!"

The stone table had been crafted from an extremely solid slab of green rock!

Even though green rocks were not considered spiritual materials, the formidable clans in Black Cloud City all used it as a construction material, due to its toughness.

A rock was a rock, and was definitely tougher than the body of a Qi warrior with a low cultivation base.

According to Nie Qian, Qi warriors who had just entered Lesser Heaven stage would need to use spiritual power to strengthen their body, so as to match the hardness of the green rock.

Strengthened by their spiritual power, Qi warriors with a mid-stage or late-stage of Lesser Heaven cultivation base could be tougher than the green rock.

However, before reaching the Lesser Heaven stage, even if they wrapped himself in spiritual power, a Qi warrior wouldn't be able to match the toughness of the green rock.

Since his rage-filled fist strike could shatter a piece of green rock, in the event that he struck a Qi warrior's body, that Qi warrior would only be able to survive if his cultivation base had reached or surpassed Lesser Heaven.

Qi warriors who had just entered the Lesser Heaven stage might be killed instantly by a single blow.

And those with a similar cultivation base to his own, Qi warriors of the ninth level of Qi Refining or lower, would die beyond the shadow of a doubt!

“The explosive power is terrifying. However, it is also terrifying to have consumed all my spiritual power with one punch! With a single strike using up all my spiritual power, I would have no more strength to fight back afterwards, leaving me at the complete mercy of my enemy.

“This style must be used with extreme caution!”

After the initial ecstasy, he gradually came to realize this style of punch was a double-edged sword by nature. If he couldn't kill his opponent with a single strike, he could only wait to be killed.

However, he also had the feeling that the power of this fist strike hadn't been displayed to its full extent.

At present, with his poor cultivation base, a single punch managed to completely drain the spiritual power in his dantian's

spiritual sea. Obviously, that wasn't its ultimate limit.

He was sure that with a better cultivation base and a larger amount of spiritual power, the power of this fist strike may possibly rise to a whole new level!

“In the mysterious world, there were a total of 32 giant hands reaching into the heavens. Every one of them was the embodiment of a style of striking that was as domineering as this one! If I manage to comprehend the essence of all those 32 styles, then...”

With these thoughts, Nie Tian's eyes emanated a feverish light of excitement.

As of this moment, he firmly believed that resisting Li Fan's temptation and not revealing the secrets of the animal bone was the smartest choice of his entire life!

By this point, Nie Donghai walked in, looked at the messy floor, and asked, “What happened here?!”

“I was trying to comprehend a fist strike,” Nie Tian smiled joyfully.

“A fist strike?” Staring at the floor full of rubble, Nie Donghai's eyes flashed a hint of astonishment. In the next moment, he nodded his head and said, “That woman from the An clan has tried every means to get the secrets of the spatial rift from you. The offer she made this time... was too hard to reject. I've already

accepted it on your behalf.”

# Chapter 33: A Command Medallion From Out Of Nowhere

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As he spoke, Nie Donghai pulled out a palm-sized command medallion from his breast pocket and handed it to Nie Tian.

When it touched Nie Tian's hand, it gave off the feeling that it had been carved out of a single piece of frosty jade.

A jewel-bedecked pavilion was engraved on the front of the command medallion, on the eaves of which hung a large number of fine spiritual tools. When he turned it around, Nie Tian saw "Spiritual Treasure Sect" in huge block characters.

"What's this?" Nie Tian asked confusedly.

Nie Donghai pondered for a moment, and elaborated, "This is the command medallion to the trial. As you know, there are six other cities in the vicinity that are around the same size as Black Cloud City. They are Bone Shatter City, Thunder Clap City, Dim Star City, Frost Stone City, Cold Moon City, and Yellow Sand City.

"In the other six cities, there are many clans like ours, each of which cling to different Qi warrior sects like we do.

"Among the mountains and rivers in between these seven cities, there exist four formidable Qi warrior sects, the Cloudsoaring sect being one of them.

“Other than the Cloudsoaring sect, there are the Spiritual Treasure sect, the Grayvale sect and the Mystic Mist sect.

“In Black Cloud City, our clan serves the Cloudsoaring sect, the An clan relies on the Spiritual Treasure sect, and the Yun clan... clings to the Grayvale sect.

“The clans in the other six cities are mortal clans like ours. They also serve the Spiritual Treasure sect, the Cloudsoaring sect, the Grayvale sect, and the Mystic Mist sect, by mining in the mountains, growing spirit plants, or taking care of mortal world affairs for them.

Nie Tian listened attentively and nodded along. “I see.”

Nie Donghai continued, “It’s said that the Spiritual Treasure sect, the Cloudsoaring sect, the Grayvale sect, and the Mystic Mist sect belong to the same Qi warriors’ alliance. Ostensibly, these four Qi warrior sects work together, but they actually secretly compete with each other, and fights often break out between their juniors.

“Competition is the necessary path Qi warriors must tread in order to train themselves.

“Rulers of the four great Qi warrior sects purposely allow their juniors to fight amongst themselves. In their eyes, the best way to continuously improve the cultivation base and display remarkable talent is to go through such a process.



“They themselves surpassed their peers step by step and achieved their current accomplishments in the same way.

“In order to train the juniors, the four sects often intentionally create conflicts and unique environments to allow them to grasp the essence of their spiritual powers through battle, and to comprehend the profundity of different stages.

“Of course, they operate these events in a way to make sure everything is under their control.

“Like this one...”

With these words, Nie Donghai halted, giving Nie Tian a moment to digest what he had just said.

Nie Tian reflected for a while, and soon understood the intentions of the four great Qi warrior sects. He nodded his head and indicated for Nie Donghai to continue.

“In our vast expanse, there exists numerous mysterious dimensions. These dimensions may be parallel to the place we are in, but each of them has their own wonders.

“Some of the dimensions are extremely deadly, and remain unconquered to this day.

“There are also mysterious dimensions which have been fully explored and researched by the four great sects, thus leaving

behind no further secrets.

“The Spiritual Treasure sect is in control of a mysterious dimension named ‘Green Illusion’, which has been completely conquered. I heard that when the Green Illusion dimension was first discovered, not only were there high-level spirit beasts, but also fierce, savage alien species.

“However, under the power of the alliance of the four powerful Qi warrior sects, the fierce tribes and the high-level spirit beasts of the Green Illusion dimension were all wiped out.

“The premium quality spiritual materials, corpses of the spirit beasts, and secrets of the savage tribes in the Green Illusion dimension were long ago split up between the four major sects.

“However, the Green Illusion dimension still exists.

“For purpose of training their juniors, the four major sects intentionally spared the lives of the low-level spirit beasts there. Once every few years, they arrange for juniors of the Qi Refining stage to participate in trials in the Green Illusion dimension.

“There, they fight spirit beasts of similar levels to refine their battling techniques, strengthen their hearts, and comprehend the profundity of their stages.

“Due to the fact that the Green Illusion dimension belongs to the Spiritual Treasure sect, they usually have fifteen slots for every

trial.

“On the other hand, the Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, and Mystic Mist sect each have ten slots.

“It will be the same with this trial. The four major sects are going to arrange a total of forty-five juniors of Qi Refining stage.

“I’ve also just heard recently that Nie Xian is going to be among the ten juniors of the Cloudsoaring sect. Nie Xian has reached the ninth level of Qi Refining, and is only one step away from stepping into the Lesser Heaven stage. The Cloudsoaring sect hopes that he can use this chance to properly understand the essence of how to wield spiritual power and eventually break into the Lesser Heaven stage.

“The entire Cloudsoaring sect only has ten slots, and some of them went to a few sect elders’ grandchildren. The rest of the slots have been gifted to clans who rely on the Cloudsoaring sect just like ours.

“However, the Nie clan is not among them.

“Since we don’t have any slots, I... didn’t mention it to you before.”

With these words, he took a deep look at the command medallion in Nie Tian’s hand and said, “I didn’t expect that woman from the An clan to send you a command medallion as a gift.

“Obviously, she intends to admit you into the Green Illusion dimension by giving you this command medallion, and deploy members of the An clan to keep a watch on you while you are in there, in hope of learning the secrets of the spatial rifts that appeared in the Nie clan.

“Even though I understand her intentions, this is just too rare an opportunity, so I have decided to let you participate in the trial.”

Actually, before he entered the room, Nie Donghai was still on the fence about whether he should let Nie Tian to go to the Green Illusion dimension.

Those juniors who were entering the Green Illusion dimension would be disciples of the Spiritual Treasure sect, Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, Mystic Mist sect, together with talented youngsters from the major clans of the seven cities.

Most participants would be in the sixth level of Qi Refining or higher, while many of them would be in the ninth level of Qi Refining, just one step away from entering Lesser Heaven stage.

In the Green Illusion dimension, any kind of fight was allowed, as long as there was no killing.

Under such circumstances, battles would take place extremely frequently, and it was permitted to seriously injure one's opponent.

He originally worried that it wouldn't be safe for Nie Tian to go to the Green Illusion dimension with his sixth level Qi Refining cultivation base, and wanted to give it up.

However, as he walked in, he noticed that the green rock table had been reduced to a floor full of gravel...

At that point, he changed his mind.

Nie Tian clenched his hand down tightly onto the command medallion that An Shiyi had sent him, looking radiant and full of fighting spirit. "Grandfather! I must go to that Green Illusion dimension! Please rest assured, I won't let anyone walk over me!"

For no apparent reason, the thought of being able to fight juniors of his own age made him seethe with excitement, and he couldn't wait one more second to rush into action.

It seemed he was born to fight!

"Good!" Nie Donghai also felt Nie Tian's fighting spirit. "This command medallion came from the Spiritual Treasure sect, so you have to enter together with the people from the Spiritual Treasure sect. First thing tomorrow, the Spiritual Treasure sect will send people over to pick you up at our clan and take you to the Green Illusion dimension.

"You'd better find a place to hide the object that can cause spatial

disorders, and not carry it into the Green Illusion dimension.

“What’s more, I believe the Spiritual Treasure sect people will keep an eye on you while you are in there, so be smart.”

“I understand.” Nie Tian nodded his head.

He knew that An Shiyi would definitely not gift him a command medallion to the Green Illusion dimension for no reason. An Shiyi’s men would definitely be watching him all the time, hoping to solve the mystery behind the spatial disorder through him, so that they could find and control a more mysterious and more powerful secret dimension.

Therefore, he decided not to bring the animal bone to the Green Illusion dimension with him.

...

At the same time, in the Yun clan...

Yun Zhiguo wore an ecstatic look on his face while he returned to his house, humming a little tune.

Inside, Yuan Qiuying, her son Yun Song, and several trusted followers that she had brought along from the Yuan clan were all waiting anxiously.

Seeing Yun Zhiguo returning with a face full of smiles, Yuan Qiuying suddenly become enlivened, and blurted, “How did it go? Do you have it?”

Yun Zhiguo burst into laughter. “Only eleven years old, and our Song’er has already reached the sixth level of Qi Refining. He is undoubtedly the most qualified in the entire Yun clan to go to the Green Illusion dimension!”

“I’ll say!” Yuan Qiuying laughed charmingly. “Even if they don’t give face to our family, they must give face to my clan. Ours is the most powerful clan in Frost Stone City, and even among the many clans that rely on the Grayvale sect, our clan is still the most powerful one. I’ve already lowered myself to marry you, so your clan had better give face to my father.”

“Exactly, no doubt about it.” Yun Zhiguo gave a loud laugh. “If I hadn’t married you, I’m afraid that this slot would probably haven’t been given to Song’er. This is all thanks to you.”

“It’s good that you understand that.” Yuan Qiuying was quite satisfied with his attitude.

Just as she was about to say more, a man rushed into the room with a strange look on his face. It was the old servant that had been assigned the task of killing Nie Qian and Nie Tian.

“Mistress, I’ve just learned that An Shiyi sent a command medallion to Nie Tian.”

“Nie Tian!” Yuan Qiuying opened her eyes wide as the memory of her humiliation by Nie Tian in front of the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion rushed back to her. With rage filling her heart, she said, “Song’er! You are going to enter the Green Illusion dimension with your older cousin Yuan Feng this time, who I’ve always cherished since he was little. He already reached the ninth level of Qi Refining last year, and was officially accepted into the Grayvale sect.

“Follow Little Feng when you are in the Green Illusion dimension,” she instructed viciously. “Once you come across that little punk Nie Tian, exert all your means to destroy him and make him a useless person!”

“Please rest assured, mother. I know what to do!”



# Chapter 34: The Trial

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The Green Illusion dimension trials took place once every ten years, and involved the four sects and twenty-five clans of the seven cities.

There were a total of twenty-five clans in the seven cities that were similar with Black Cloud City. Those clans that had recently demonstrated their worthiness would be rewarded with slots by the four sects, and would choose their most talented juniors to enter the Green Illusion dimension together with the young and talented juniors from the four sects.

This Green Illusion dimension trial was imminent, hence the twenty-five clans of the seven cities had been getting ready and doing their best to pour their resources in the direction of those juniors who would participate in the trial.

Some of the juniors were gifted the highest level spiritual tools within the clan, while others were gifted with precious medicinal pills. Every one of them was prepared to display their talents in the Green Illusion dimension.

However, all Nie Donghai could give Nie Tian was concern and advice, due to the poor condition he had been in over the years.

The next day...

Early in the morning, Nie Donghai led Nie Tian to the front gate of the Nie clan, where they waited.

“Although An Shiyi is cruel and merciless, the woman has her principles,” Nie Donghai said calmly, “She has her bottom lines, so she definitely won’t lower herself to the level of harming you. I feel safe putting you in her hands. All you have to do is to be careful in the Green Illusion dimension and don’t expose your secrets.”

Nie Tian gently nodded. “Consider it done, grandpa. I’ll take good care of myself.”

“Okay.” Nie Donghai squinted his eyes and gazed into the direction where the An clan was located. “Yun Zhiguo’s son Yun Song is also going to attend this trial in the Green Illusion dimension. That shrew Yuan Qiuying hates your guts, so I’m afraid she’ll instruct Yun Song to lay murderous hands on you in the Green Illusion dimension.”

“Yun Song?” Nie Tian’s mouth twitched with disdain. “I managed to beat him until he puked blood when I was in the fourth level of Qi Refining. It’s only been several months. He should still be in the sixth level of Qi Refining. I, on the other hand, am now also in the sixth level of Qi Refining. Humph, he better pray not to bump into me in the Green Illusion dimension!”

Nie Donghai’s face turned grim. “It’s not him that I worry about. It’s Yuan Feng from the Yuan clan of Frost Stone City. He and Yuan Qiuying have always been close, and that kid is truly a fierce character. Yuan Feng broke through into the ninth level of Qi Refining a year ago and has already been officially accepted by the Grayvale sect. Moreover, he is regarded highly in the Grayvale

sect, and was appointed as leader of the Grayvale sect in this trial!

“Yuan Feng is older than you, and his cultivation base is higher than yours. As leader of the Grayvale sect in this trial into the Green Illusion dimension, every Grayvale participant will take orders from him.

“Remember, you must always stay with the other participants from the Spiritual Treasure sect, and try not to get separated from their group.

“In case you accidentally stray, go find Nie Xian and team up with the participants from the Cloudsoaring sect, if possible. You will enter with the Spiritual Treasure sect, but after all, the Nie clan is subordinate to the Cloudsoaring sect, so their leader ought to admit you into their group.

“Teaming up with others is very important. Your individual power is extremely limited. Keep that in mind!”

Nie Tian listened attentively and kept nodding along, growing increasingly expectant regarding the Green Illusion dimension’s trial.

By his very nature, he enjoyed this kind of competition!

Looking at Nie Tian, who was full of fighting spirit, Nie Donghai secretly nodded his head, and had the sudden feeling that the Green Illusion dimension’s trial could possibly let Nie Tian shed

away his old self and take on a new identity, truly understanding the cruelty and dangers of the Qi cultivation world.

He vaguely felt that Nie Tian would be able to adapt to the Green Illusion dimension.

An He, the An clan's overweight old servant, came in a horse carriage from the silent morning roads and arrived in front of them. "Master Nie, our mistress has sent me here to take Nie Tian to the Green Illusion dimension."

"Thank for going through all the trouble." Nie Donghai said, then glanced at Nie Tian and said, "Come, greet uncle An."

Nie Tian quickly bowed down. "Uncle An!"

An He nodded expressionlessly towards Nie Tian, then signalled for him to get in the carriage.

Nie Tian didn't waste any time, and entered the carriage under Nie Donghai's concerned gaze.

After Nie Tian was in, An He told Nie Donghai, "Master Nie, don't you worry. With me escorting Nie Tian to participate in the Green Illusion dimension's trial, we surely won't be secretly attacked. That kind of dirty move is not something I will allow."

An He threw a meaningful glance in the Yun clan's direction.

“Many thanks!” Nie Donghai clasped his hands.

Clearly, he knew An He’s status and power in the An clan, therefore he seemed quite relieved.

“I’ll bring Nie Tian back safe and sound in half a year.” With these words, An He said no more. Snapping his whip, he sent the majestic black horse galloping forward with great force.

The sound of horse hooves clashing against ground rang out in the silent morning street. Before long, the carriage disappeared from Nie Donghai’s vision.

...

Three days later, in the desolate and uninhabited marshland outside of Thunder Clap City...

The marshland was completely covered by swaths of peat moss. By the side of a clear lake, An Shiyi, who was feeling hot and stuffy, cooled herself with a paper fan as she explained the rules of the Green Illusion dimension to fourteen well-dressed young boys and girls.

Those young boys and girls were from the Spiritual Treasure sect and the clans that clung to the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Most of them were in the seventh level or eighth level of Qi Refining, with only three in the ninth level of Qi Refining.

Those three were dressed in bright yellow robes, with the character “Treasure” conspicuously sewn to the chest, which made them stand out from the rest eleven youngsters.

They had already been admitted as disciples of the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Among the three of them, there were two boys and one girl, with the beautiful girl being their leader.

The girl resembled An Shiyi to some extent. As young as she was, she already had a delicate, curvaceous physique. The way she behaved was composed and relaxed. Apparently she was used to calling the shots.

The girl’s name was An Ying. Looking very impatient, she said, “Alright. Alright. You’ve said too much. Don’t you think you are being superfluous?! The sect elders have already given us the warnings and advice that you are giving us now. There is no need for you to repeat it again.”

“Then how come you’re the only one complaining?!” An Shiyi said with a glare.

An Ying chuckled, a sound as pleasant as bird singing. “You are my sister. What are you gonna do about it? Besides, they’re all

cursing you inwardly. Since they don't dare to say it out loud, I have to."

Before An Shiyi could scold her, An Ying quickly said, "When will the kid from the Nie clan arrive? He's not even from our sect, but has kept all of us waiting for him. He really thinks he is a big deal!"

An Ying's cultivation base had reached the ninth level of Qi Refining and she had been a disciple of the Spiritual Treasure sect since long ago. Furthermore, she was the one who would lead the participants from the Spiritual Treasure sect in this trial.

Three days ago, when An Shiyi returned to the Spiritual Treasure sect, she specifically found her and told her that the An clan had given their only slot to a boy named Nie Tian from the Nie clan.

An Shiyi had instructed her to keep a close watch of Nie Tian in the Green Illusion dimension and pay attention to every single unusual thing about Nie Tian.

Actually the An clan had fought hard for that trial slot, and they originally had intended to let An Ying's younger brother use it to enter the Green Illusion dimension's trial.

Therefore, An Ying was very dissatisfied when An Shiyi gave the slot to Nie Tian.

Although she realized that An Shiyi must have arranged for Nie Tian to enter the Green Illusion dimension for a reason, An Ying

was still rather upset about it.

Because of that, she hated Nie Tian before they even met, all for taking her brother's slot.

The trial was about to begin soon, but Nie Tian still hadn't shown up. The fact that he made all these people wait this long fueled her hatred towards him even further.

An Shiyi knew An Ying held a grudge against Nie Tian, so she didn't argue with her. "Well, Black Cloud City is far away. I expected him to be a little late. Don't worry. They should be here soon according to my calculations. Little Ying, although Nie Tian isn't a member of our Spiritual Treasure sect, since I gave him the command medallion and invited him to enter the Green Illusion dimension, you should be more magnanimous and try not to give him a hard time."

"Someone as broadminded as me wouldn't stoop to his level." An Ying let out a harrumph and glanced at the two boys in the ninth level of Qi Refining who were also from the Spiritual Treasure sect. "As for the others, I won't be able to control their actions."

Under An Ying's gaze, those two youngsters both briefly raised their chins, their faces full of arrogance.

"You little rascal!" said An Shiyi.

She clearly knew those two boys from the Spiritual Treasure sect



had always admired and followed An Ying's orders.

As long as An Ying showed a smidgen of dissatisfaction towards Nie Tian, they would exert all means to give Nie Tian a hard time.

They were Zheng Rui and Pan Tao. Both of them were grandchildren of Spiritual Treasure sect elders, so even An Shiyi wouldn't be able to control them.

"Since he dares to enter the Green Illusion dimension with the Spiritual Treasure sect's command medallion, he should already be prepared to become a target..." Finally, An Shiyi gave up, knowing her persuasion wouldn't work.

"Relax, sis," An Ying said reassuringly, "I will 'take good care of him' in the Green Illusion dimension!"

At that moment, An Shiyi suddenly raised the end of her eyebrow and looked into the distance. "Here he comes."

An He from the An clan was leading Nie Tian, as their figures slowly became clear on a distant muddy road, striding in An Shiyi's direction.

# Chapter 35: The Surging Undercurrent

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Even though Nie Tian was still tens of meters away from the lake where An Shiyi was, he could already feel numerous unfriendly gazes converging upon him.

Nie Tian's expression was still firm and determined as he followed An He, walking over in a composed manner.

Once within earshot, he put on a bright smile and called out to An Shiyi, "Beautiful sister, we meet again."

An Shiyi smiled and laughed. "I'd hoped to meet you in Black Cloud City a few days ago. Unfortunately, you had suddenly fallen ill. Otherwise, I might have personally escorted you here."

"That was my fault," Nie Tian said, sounding a little embarrassed. "I understand that you've been kind to me. The slots in the Green Illusion dimension trial are so precious that our clan doesn't even have one. However, you gave a valuable slot to me. I'll remember your kindness forever in my heart. In the future, should you face any trouble, as long as it's within my power to help, I'll spare no effort to aid you, elder sister!"

Before An Shiyi could reply, An Ying snorted and said, "What a sweet-talker! Should anything happen to my elder sister, how could you possibly help her? Your clan is the weakest in Black Cloud City, and completely overshadowed by the Yun clan. What makes you think you are capable of helping my sister?"

“Who are you?” Nie Tian asked, looking surprised.

The one to answer the question was An Shiyi. Smiling, she said, “She’s my sister An Ying, who’s also from Black Cloud City. You’ve probably heard of her.”

“An Ying...” Nie Tian was inwardly shocked. Nodding, he continued, “Of course I’ve heard of her.”

An Ying was actually An Shiyi’s cousin, and the most promising star among the younger generation of the An clan. A year ago, she managed to break through into the ninth level of Qi Refining at the age of twelve, and thus emerge from the An clan, becoming a disciple of the Spiritual Treasure sect.

It was said that her cultivation talent was even more outstanding than An Shiyi’s.

The whole An clan secretly believed that in the future, she might even surpass An Shiyi!

As Nie Tian thought back to the wonders he had encountered in the mysterious dimension, he confidently said, “You’re right. My cultivation base is not very high at the moment, and the Nie clan is not the strongest among the clans. But time can change all things. Who knows will happen in the future? Perhaps one day, when elder sister is in trouble, I will be able to help her!”

“In that case, I’d like to thank you in advance,” An Shiyi said

jokingly, casting a glare at An Ying. “It’s about time I summon the other three sects.”

With these words, she took out a command medallion from her sleeve pocket and pressed a slender jade finger down onto it.

A misty spiritual aura immediately flowed out of her fingertip and filled the whole command medallion.

The next moment, a light ring sprang out from within.

Nie Tian took a close look at the command medallion, and noticed that it wasn’t made of jade, but rather, some sort of strange metal.

Obviously, An Shiyi’s command medallion was different from the one he had been given.

An Ying looked at Nie Tian and said in a domineering tone, “Since you will enter the Green Illusion dimension holding our command medallion, you must listen to everything I say once we’re inside. Whatever I tell you to do, you must do!”

Nie Tian’s only reply was a cold chuckle.

Seeing his nonchalant attitude, An Ying tilted her chin up a bit and declared, “I don’t care what you think now. I’ll see to it that you obey me when we’re in the Green Illusion dimension.”

All the youngsters by her side followed her lead, casting unfriendly glances in Nie Tian's direction.

Nie Tian ignored them.

Before long, Li Fan appeared from a distant copse, followed by the participants from the Cloudsoaring sect.

"Uncle Li..." Nie Tian mouthed. Considering that Li Fan had spent so much time in the Nie Clan, he felt a bit embarrassed. Ducking his head down, he sidled over to join the group of teenagers next to An Ying.

After all, he was a member of the Nie clan. Showing up here with people from the Spiritual Treasure sect would seem somewhat strange, and he was afraid that Li Fan might read too much into it. An Ying almost instantly noticed what he was doing. Laughing loudly, she grabbed his arm and dragged him forcefully out of the crowd. "What are you hiding for? Even though the Cloudsoaring sect doesn't have a slot for you, we, the Spiritual Treasure sect, are wealthy enough to gift you one. What's the big deal? Come. Let Mr. Li have a good look at you!"

Her hand wasn't very large, but the force she exerted when she grabbed Nie Tian's arm was considerable, allowing her to easily pull him out into the open.

Nie Tian looked embarrassed, but deep down was astounded by her strength. Therefore, he couldn't help but take a deep look at

An Ying, deeming her as a major opponent.

He was sure that when An Ying pulled him, she didn't apply her spiritual power. Although he didn't react instantly, he did subconsciously resist her once he realized what she was doing.

Although he didn't use his full strength, it was enough that a normal woman would never be able to force him to move.

And yet, An Ying succeeded!

Before he could recover from his shock, Li Fan's eyes flashed with a strange light, and he said, "Nie Tian? What are you doing here?"

"Greetings, uncle Li," Nie Tian said with a sheepish smile. Aware that he couldn't extricate himself from the situation, he stepped forward and bowed respectfully. "Elder sister An gave me a command medallion, granting me the opportunity to enter the Green Illusion dimension. I didn't mean to hide anything, uncle Li, it's just..."

"You don't need to explain." Li Fan looked over with a frown at the smiling An Shiyi. "You held nothing back, did you?" The moment he saw Nie Tian, he immediately understood An Shiyi's intentions.

Looking as composed as ever, An Shiyi smiled and said, "Nie Tian and I hit it off, and I believe he has a bright future. Since our sect

has many slots to the trial, and I have the right to distribute them, giving a slot to him wasn't a big deal."

Meanwhile, Nie Tian happened to notice that Jiang Lingzhu, the same girl he had met in front of the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion was standing behind Li Fan, waving at him.

There were nine people clustered around her, one of whom was Nie Xian, who had just recently been accepted into the Cloudsoaring sect.

Nie Xian looked back and forth between Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Tian, his face full of confusion.

"Nie Tian, it's me," Jiang Lingzhu called out. "Don't you remember me?"

Nie Tian had been so surprised to see Nie Xian that he forgot to acknowledge Jiang Lingzhu. Only when he heard her yelling did he snap out of his daze.

Waving back, he said, "Oh, hey, you're here, too!"

Nie Xian's expression grew even more confused.

Even An Ying turned to stare in surprise at Nie Tian. "How do you know Jiang Lingzhu?" she asked. "With her help, you wouldn't even need my sister to get a command medallion for yourself."

“She could do such a thing?!” Nie Tian asked in surprise.

“She’s the daughter of the Cloudsoaring sect’s sectmaster, and leader of the trial participants from the Cloudsoaring sect. If she made the request, she could surely have gotten you into the Green Illusion dimension.”

Nie Tian was flabbergasted. “She’s Jiang Zhisu’s daughter!?”

Although he had met Jiang Lingzhu once, he was completely unaware that she had such a powerful background.

He used to think that Jiang Lingzhu was a child of another clan that served the Cloudsoaring sect, similar to Nie Xian. He didn’t expect her to be from such a lofty family.

Even as Nie Tian stood there in shock, the participants from the Grayvale sect and the Mystic Mist sect also arrived.

The Grayvale sect participants were led by a gray-garbed old man. Behind him was a teenager, who stood as straight and sharp as a spear!

Yun Song, who had once fought Nie Tian, was standing next to him, pointing at Nie Tian and whispering something to him.

A moment later, that teenager’s fierce gaze pierced the wind and



flew towards Nie Tian like a sword.

Nie Tian met his gaze, and immediately felt stabbing pain in his eyes. His expression darkened.

He instantly realized that this teenager was Yuan Feng, whom Nie Donghai had mentioned, leader of the the Grayvale sect trial participants.

Nie Tian was already on guard against Yuan Feng, knowing that he would be one of his greatest enemies in the Green Illusion dimension. “A year ago, he broke through to the ninth level of Qi Refining,” he thought, “and hence was officially accepted by the Grayvale sect. I can see already that he is worthy of his reputation.” As for the Mystic Mist sect, an old lady led their trial participants, and arrived last.

The second they arrived, she barked, “You! Girl from the An Clan. Hurry and open the gate to the secret dimension! I have important matters to attend to after sending these kids into the Green Illusion dimension.”

“Okay,” An Shiyi said, smiling.

She subsequently took out the same command medallion which she had previously used to summon the other three sects. After she filled it again with her spiritual power, it instantly became as splendid and gorgeous as the moon.

WHOOSH!

All of a sudden, the command medallion left her palm and flew to the center of the lake, where it floated above the crystal-clear water, releasing ripples of shockingly strong energy.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Beams of silver light splattered out from within the medallion, and then converged into the center of the quiet lake, which then began to ripple with waves. The waves grew larger and larger, and a vortex gradually formed that led to the bottom of the lake.

Moments later, the vortex was fully formed.

“An Ying, you take the lead,” An Shiyi instructed. “Jump into that vortex with participants from Spiritual Treasure sect, and enter the Green Illusion dimension.”

“Got it.” An Ying’s seemingly tender and delicate frame suddenly bolted up into the air, flew into the vortex, and disappeared in the blink of an eye.

The other two disciples from the Spiritual Treasure sect, who had also reached the ninth level of Qi Refining, followed her by leaping into the air, disappearing into the vortex a moment later.

An Shiyi rushed the rest of their participants from various major clans to do the same. Under her direction, they all threw

themselves into the vortex, one after another.

When they had all entered, Nie Tian also launched up into the air and shot into the vortex like a bullet. An Shiyi watched him closely the entire time.

“Strange,” she thought. “He didn’t cause the space to change in the least bit. Am I wrong?”

An Shiyi, who had been staring at Nie Tian all the time, grew suspicious after sensing no anomalies at all when he was completely lost in the vortex.

“Is it our turn yet?” Li Fan called out.

“Yes,” An Shiyi replied in a disappointed tone. “Participants from the Cloudsoaring sect may enter now.”

Li Fan leaned over to Jiang Lingzhu and quietly said, “Go ahead. In case you run into Nie Tian in the Green Illusion dimension, remember to watch out for him. If he stays with people from the Spiritual Treasure sect, he’ll be targeted for sure. If possible, include him in your group. After all, he’s from the Nie clan, and we’re supposed to take care of him.”

Jiang Lingzhu looked at Yuan Feng out of the corner of her eyes. “I’m afraid he might encounter those from the Grayvale sect before we meet. I’ve noticed that guy has reeked off murderous intentions ever since he identified Nie Tian.”

“Be more careful then.”

“Sure. “

Soon afterwards, participants from the Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, and Mystic Mist sect all jumped into the vortex in the middle of the lake.

# Chapter 36: Green Illusion Dimension

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It was a green and misty evening, and numerous mountains jutted up from the greenish-black earth.

There were broken stones scattered all around the foot of one particular mountain, within which could be seen the ash-covered skeletons of dead spirit beasts.

They had been low-grade spirit beasts in life, but after years of erosion, their spiritual power had long since been drained away. Therefore, they were no longer useful for equipment forging, and were nothing that would catch the interest of anyone who saw them.

BUZZZ!

All of a sudden, bright light started to shoot out of a smooth stone wall, emanating strong spatial fluctuations.

The stone wall immediately turned into a shiny mirror, within which numerous flickering figures could be seen.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

The figures suddenly flashed out of the stone wall to land moments later at the foot of the mountain.

Participants from the Spiritual Treasure sect stood still, staring at the green dome-like sky above their heads and yelling excitedly.

“The Green Illusion dimension!”

“This is the Green Illusion dimension!”

“We’re finally here!”

Nie Tian stood among them, gazing around curiously to examine the Green Illusion dimension. When no one was paying any attention, he drew upon the Qi Refining Incantation to sense the spiritual Qi of the Heaven and Earth.

Just for a moment, he realized the spiritual Qi here was even weaker than in Black Cloud City, not to mention the rich spiritual Qi in Cloudsoaring Mountain.

“No wonder...” He murmured to himself, finally understanding why the Cloudsoaring sect, Spiritual Treasure sect, Greyvale sect, and Mystic Mist sect hadn’t left people behind to practice cultivation in the Green Illusion dimension after conquering it.

The reason was because the place wasn’t suited for Qi warriors to practice long term cultivation.

Every Qi warrior wanted to cultivate in a place with rich spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth. A blessed land with rich and pure energy could enhance a Qi warrior’s cultivation speed to a large extent.

Therefore, due to the faint spiritual energy here, powerful Qi warriors would never select the Green Illusion dimension as a place to cultivate.

What's more, the high-grade spirit beasts and ferocious tribes that used to live here had already been wiped out by the four sects. All precious spiritual materials had also been mined, leaving behind a location of little value or use.

Hearing the newcomers clamoring on and on, An Ying couldn't help but shout. "Everyone, be quiet!"

The enthusiastic crowd of young men and women gradually calmed down.

Next, she picked a direction and began to move. "Come with me!"

Zheng Rui and Pan Tao from the Spiritual Treasure sect gave similar orders. "Hurry up, and follow her!"

Before departing, all the teenagers from the clans that clung to the Spiritual Treasure sect had been urged by their clan elders that once they were in the Green Illusion dimension, they must listen to the disciples from the Spiritual Treasure sect.

It was due to this reason that every one of them behaved rather obediently under the domineering demands of An Ying and her two sect brothers.

Stroking the command medallion An Shiyi had given him, Nie Tian looked back at the smooth stone wall for a moment, then followed the group and marched forward silently.

Earlier, when he jumped into the vortex in the lake, he distinctly sensed the unique fluctuations of spiritual power emanating from the command medallion in his hand.

That confirmed to him that only those who carried the command medallion would be able to pass through the lake vortex to enter the Green Illusion dimension.

That command medallion was literally the key to get inside.

In six months, he would have to use the same method to go through the mirror-like Secret Dimension Gate behind him and return to the marshland.

As he followed An Ying and the group further and further away from the Secret Dimension Gate, he couldn't resist turning his head back and checking a few more times.

Before long, he saw Jiang Lingzhu, Nie Xian, and the others flashing out of the mirror-like stone wall.

After stepping into the Green Illusion dimension, Jiang Lingzhu looked around, and soon caught sight of Nie Tian, a few hundred meters away, walking further away with An Ying.



Nie Tian put on a bright smile, and nodded his head. Then, he turned around and caught up with the Spiritual Treasure sect group.

Jiang Lingzhu stood at the foot of the mountain, watching Nie Tian disappearing off in the distance. She felt a bit confused, and couldn't help but wonder what Nie Tian was thinking. "He actually started to run faster after seeing me. Could it be that he... doesn't wish to go with us?"

A hour later...

After leaving the mountain peak where the Secret Dimension Gate was located, An Ying led Nie Tian and the others to a silent and desolate wild land.

Dead tree branches and dried up beast bones were scattered about everywhere, with the ruins of stone houses visible here and there.

Everyone could tell that the stone houses had been shabby and ill-designed even before they were destroyed.

Upon a careful glance, Nie Tian couldn't find anything of note in the cold, greenish-black land other than scattered bones and wrecked stone houses.

An intense sense of loneliness and wildness rose from his heart.

Looking at the rubble and bones, he realized that this piece of land had once been home to several intelligent tribes.

Even as he pondered the subject, An Ying swept a pile of dry bones off of a millstone-sized black rock with her feet, and then sat down.

Then she signaled that the trial takers should gather around; clearly she had had something to brief them about.

Nie Tian ignored her arrogant manner. Curious about what she had to say, he followed everyone else as they approached her.

After all of the fourteen trial takers had gathered by her side, she cleared her throat and said in a charming voice, “The ferocious tribes and high grade spirit beasts in the Green Illusion dimension were wiped out long ago. The area we are standing in now was one of their living districts. I heard that the four sects suffered great casualties to completely eradicate them.

“Fortunately, it’s all over now, and the Green Illusion dimension has become the Spiritual Treasure sect’s private property.

“There are no tribes left in the Green Illusion dimension, and the only living things here should be the low grade spirit beasts.

“Before I came, the sect elders told me that there are still many first grade spirit beasts left in the Green Illusion Dimension now. However, there are four second grade spirit beasts!

“Those four spirit beasts have the strength and abilities of Qi warriors at the Lesser Heaven stage, and they are our main targets in this trial.

“The four sects have each prepared a reward for the winners. Our Spiritual Treasure sect has put forward a Heaven Comprehending Pill. The Heaven Comprehending Pill can allow warriors of the Qi Refining stage to experience and comprehend the state of mind at the Lesser Heaven, Heaven, and Greater Heaven stages, which will enable us to enter the Lesser Heaven stage much more effortlessly.

“Not only that, the enlightenment from the Heaven Comprehending Pill will also be significantly helpful for us when we enter the Heaven stage and the Greater Heaven stage.

“A Heaven Comprehending Pill is extremely valuable to us. Even in the entire Spiritual Treasure sect, they are extremely rare. As the host of this trial, our sect has indeed spared no cost.”

Trial takers from the affiliated clans all began to seethe with excitement, eyes filled with fiery light. Only Zheng Rui and Pan Tao were already aware of the information, and remained composed.

“A Heaven Comprehending Pill! I can’t believe the reward is a Heaven Comprehending Pill!”

“It appears the four sects have indeed attached great importance to this trial. A Heaven Comprehending Pill is undoubtedly the

most precious treasure for us Qi Refining stage cultivators!”

“This is terrific!”

Nie Tian was also shocked at heart.

He had heard of a Heaven Comprehending Pill before, and knew that it could allow Qi Refining stage warriors to temporarily experience and comprehend the state of mind at the Lesser Heaven, Heaven, and Greater Heaven stages.

For a cultivator to enter the Lesser Heaven stage from the ninth level of Qi Refining stage, one couldn't merely rely on the accumulation of spiritual power; a matching state of mind was required.

It was the same with entering the Heaven stage from the Lesser Heaven stage, or entering the Greater Heaven stage from the Heaven stage. The right state of mind was needed, and simply relying on the pureness and depth of spiritual power wasn't enough.

A single Heaven Comprehending Pill would benefit Qi Refining level cultivators all the way through the following three Heavenly stages. It was needless to say how rare and valuable it was.

Seeing the whole crowd getting excited, An Ying nodded and continued, “The most valuable reward is undoubtedly the Heaven Comprehending Pill provided by our sect. Other than that, the

Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, and Mystic Mist sect have also put forward three Medium level spiritual tools. Compared to the Heaven Comprehending Pill, those three spiritual tools are inferior, but if they match your cultivation attributes perfectly, they may also be of great value to you.

“The heads of the four remaining second grade spirit beasts’ heads can be used to get those four treasures. Beheading a second grade spirit beast and taking its head out of the Green Illusion dimension enables one to exchange it for a treasure.

“The strongest of the four is a Frost Python. Only its head could be used to exchange for the Heaven Comprehending Pill!”

An Ying tilted her chin, her little face full of arrogance. “As the host of this trial, the Spiritual Treasure sect has the most participants, and thus the task our sect has given us is to get the python’s head.

“However, what I want is not only that python’s head, but all of the second grade spirit beast’s heads!

“I’d like us to slaughter all of the four second grade spirit beasts in this trial. If we can’t, we’ll go and snatch them from others. We must obtain all of the heads!

“Of course, the Heaven Comprehending Pill will be mine. Don’t even think about trying to lay hands on it!

“But I’ll distribute the three spiritual tools to those of you with good performances.

“Remember! Only when we’ve obtained the heads of all the second grade spirit beasts will you be qualified to get the three spiritual tools!”

# Chapter 37: The Ghost Sect And Blood Sect

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500 kilometers south of Mystic Mist Palace...

A poisonous miasma of various colors floated in mid-air like a layer of thick clouds.

Dried bones had been piled up into an eccentric altar. In front of it could be seen a ghastly woman, as ugly and horrifying as a ghost, waving her sharp, black fingernails through the air, and simultaneously mumbling something under her breath.

Five tunic-clad young boys and girls, all of whom had relatively dark skin, were listening silently.

Eyes emanating green light, the woman said coldly, “The Spiritual Treasure sect, Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, and Mystic Mist sect ruined our major plan several days ago. We have to do something about it. There is only one goal during your journey into the Green Illusion dimension, and that is to kill all the junior disciples from the four sects. They are all in the same stage as you are, so not a single one must be left alive!”

A skinny young man licked his upper lip like a blood-thirsty beast. “Lady Night Ghost,” he said, “please rest assured. By the time we leave the Green Illusion dimension, all those juniors from the four sects will be dead.”

The young man’s name was Mo Xi, a disciple of the Ghost sect, who was in the ninth level of Qi Refining.

On his neck hung a necklace made of human thumb bones, which came from the numerous enemies he had slaughtered.

Whenever a Ghost sect disciple killed an enemy who was at the same level of cultivation, they would chop off the enemy's thumb, and string them together.

As for the rest of the four Ghost sect disciples, they had only collected enough thumb bones to make bracelets.

Mo Xi had killed so many more opponents that he was the only one who was able to craft a necklace.

Clearly, he was the most powerful and dreadful of the five.

“Yes, with you as the leader, I can rest assured.” The old woman they referred to as Night Ghost laughed in an evil, ghost-like manner before continuing. “The people from the Blood sect have also arrived.”

As of this very moment, a burly man with disheveled red hair arrived at the altar of bones, followed by five teenagers from the Blood sect.

His hair was as red as blood, and the loose strands which dangled down his wide forehead initially seemed like streams of blood.



Every one of the five boys and girls behind him reeked of a strong smell of blood, as if they had just attended a feast of gore in which they drank their fill of fresh blood.

Their leader was a properly dressed girl, who was so beautiful that it seemed as if she had come from a painting. However, she had an extremely cold look on her face, as if she was trying to scare off anyone who dared to get near.

The instant Mo Xi caught sight of her, he exclaimed, “Yu Tong!? You’re going to lead the team from the Blood sect?! Aren’t you supposed to be working on your breakthrough into the Lesser Heaven stage?”

“I will,” Yu Tong said, snorting coldly. “In the Green Illusion dimension.”

The old woman from the Ghost sect gave a low-pitched, terrifying chuckle. With a nod, she continued, “It seems the four sects really angered your Blood sect. Otherwise, you wouldn’t appoint Yu Tong to enter the Green Illusion dimension. This is wonderful. With only Mo Xi in a leadership position, I wasn’t completely sure, but with Yu Tong there too, there won’t be any problem.”

The burly man from the Blood sect looked at the disciples from his sect and chuckled. “The mission for those trial takers from the four sects is to slaughter the four second grade spirit beasts. Yours is to slaughter all of the trial takers, not the spirit beasts!

“You are the real hunters!

“The four main targets are An Ying from the Spiritual Treasure sect, Jiang Lingzhu from the Cloudsoaring sect, Yuan Feng from the Grayvale sect, and Zheng Bin from the Mystic Mist sect!

“They are viewed as core disciples of the four sects. Kill them and bring me their heads, then you’ll receive a handsome reward!

“A debt of blood must be paid in blood.” The burly man from the Blood sect harrumphed coldly. “The four sects dared to ruin our major event, so they should not blame us for destroying the foundation of their future!”

The old woman from the Ghost sect took out a piece of bone and threw it into the bone altar. “It’s about time.”

A moment later, a portal of dark-green light gradually formed in the center of the bone altar.

As she opened the portal, the old woman warned, “Remember, the Green Illusion dimension is not ours; we’ve gone through a lot to create this access point to the Secret Dimension Gate. Remember, you must finish the job and return in six months. Those who can’t return in time, or who get caught by the four sects, can simply wait for death to meet them in the Green Illusion dimension.”

The responses from the disciples were immediate.

“Got it.”

“We only need three months to finish the job. Those who can’t return in time deserve to die inside!”

“The gate is open!”

The ghastly old woman glanced over all of the eleven trial takers from the Ghost sect and the Blood sect, and then said, “Go!”

...

In the Green Illusion dimension...

Since Nie Tian wasn’t from the clans that clung to the Spiritual Treasure sect, no one talked to him the entire time.

Actually, he felt comfortable that way, and didn’t try to start conversations with any of the other teenagers. He intentionally trailed behind, following from a distance.

An Ying had apparently received some tips from the elders of the Spiritual Treasure sect, as she would take out a map every now and then, examine it, and then point in a certain direction.

From the look of things, she had already identified the location of the python, which could be used in exchange for the Heaven

## Comprehending Pill.

Under An Ying's leadership, the trial takers from the Spiritual Treasure sect continued to march through the cold and silent wastelands.

There were no sun, moon, or stars in the Green Illusion dimension. There were no days or nights. In fact, without a special device that could be used to mark time, it would be hard to determine the exact date and time.

Nie Tian couldn't possibly have such a device, since he was from the Nie clan. Therefore, he had no clue of how long they had been wandering in the wastelands.

However, based on his judgement, he was fairly certain that they had traveled in the cold and silence for at least two days.

During that time, they didn't run into any spirit beasts; all they saw were a handful of spirit beast skeletons.

At one point, An Ying suddenly stopped in place and gestured to the vague shadows of some distant glaciers. "We've almost reached the border of the wastelands," she explained. "Those glaciers in front of us are our destination. That frost python could be lurking in them. From now on, everyone must be careful."

"The wastelands were originally the domain of several fierce tribes, but they were wiped out long ago. That's why we have been

safe along the way.

“However, once we leave the wastelands and enter the glaciers, we should prepare ourselves for possible encounters with the Green Illusion dimension’s spirit beasts. Those spirit beasts only exist in the Green Illusion dimension, and they regard all outsiders as enemies. Once they see us, they will immediately attack.

“After all, they are smart enough to know that all of the high grade spirit beasts have been killed by cultivators from our sects.

While talking, An Ying suddenly lay her eyes on Nie Tian.

Nie Tian stared blankly at her, not sure why she suddenly focused her gaze on him at that point.

An Ying smiled. “From now on, we may come across spirit beasts at any moment, and they will most likely attack those who walk in the forefront. The landscape of the glacier area is very complicated, so it will be hard to know where the spirit beasts are hiding, and from which direction they will launch attacks.”

Upon hearing her words, Zheng Rui and Pan Tao’s faces immediately filled with unfriendly intentions.

An Ying squinted and snickered. “Nie Tian, you’re not a member of our sect, yet you’ve taken one of our sect’s command medallions to get here into the Green Illusion trial. Therefore, you owe us something in return. The task of finding the path ahead naturally

falls upon you.”

All of a sudden, every trial taker’s gaze converged on Nie Tian.

When those boys and girls from various clans stared at him, their eyes were full of malice.

Obviously, they took it for granted that Nie Tian, as the outsider, should be the one to take the risk and explore the road ahead of them.

Nie Tian smiled wryly. “Can I say no?”

“Sure.” An Ying laughed again, and this time it seemed more sincere than before. “You’re welcome to disobey my orders. As long as you’re ready to part ways with us and travel alone in the Green Illusion dimension.”

Nie Tian rubbed his nose and nodded. “Alright, I’ll do it.”

A wise man knew when to bend himself. Considering his ignorance regarding the Green Illusion dimension, he knew that if he left the Spiritual Treasure sect’s group, he would be no different than a blind man.

Moreover, An Ying had a map that could lead them to the four second grade spirit beasts, that being another important reason for him to stay with the group.

Once he left An Ying, he would be like a headless chicken, unable to find directions in the vast Green Illusion dimension.

He might not even be able to find his way back, and thus end up getting stuck in the Green Illusion dimension.

Therefore, even though he knew perfectly well that An Ying was targeting him, he could only bear with it temporarily, and pay her back in the future.

“Good boy,” said An Ying with a content smile. “Go on ahead and lead us into the glaciers. Show us whether the spirit beasts in the Green Illusion dimension are as ferocious as the sect elders have told us.”

Nie Tian acted obediently. “Sure”

He stepped up his pace, and had soon walked from the very back of the group to the front.

Under An Ying’s urging gaze, he strode out into the vanguard position. An hour later, they were out of the wastelands, and had reached the border of glacier area, which was the turf of the spirit beasts.

ROOOOAR!

The minute they entered the glacier area, angry roars of the spirit beasts started to ring in their ears.

ROAR! HOWL!

All of a sudden, one after another, numerous spirit beasts jumped out from behind jade-like frozen trees. Hatred flashed in their eyes as they abruptly launched attacks and threw themselves towards Nie Tian at the same time.



## Chapter 38: Fierce Fight!

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The world was vast and full of resources of all kinds. The spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth filled every corner of the world, and was what made Qi warriors so powerful.

Since spirit beasts also breathed spiritual Qi, they too could cultivate and become more powerful.

Just like Qi warriors, when spirit beasts strengthened themselves with spiritual power, they could be graded according to their level of strength.

Spirit beasts were divided into ten grades which corresponded to the Qi warrior's ten stages. A first grade spirit beast's strength was equivalent to that of a Qi refining cultivator.

The first grade spirit beasts were the lowest ranked. They were usually physically strong, and had tough bones. However, they weren't able to release their internal spiritual power in any form.

Despite being able to wield only external strength, they were big threats to Qi warriors who had just started along the path of cultivation.

RAARGH!

One after another, spirit beasts roared, bolting out from the glacier region to dash towards Nie Tian, who stood at the forefront

of the group.

Considering that this was the first time he had encountered spirit beasts, it was no surprise that his jaw dropped in shock.

However, a mere moment later, he calmed himself.

“One, two, three... eleven, there are eleven spirit beasts!” By the time he confirmed their numbers, the beast leading the pack, a Frost Armor Rhino, was already closing in.

It was about three meters long and covered in silver-colored frost armor. As it ran along, a terrifyingly cold mist puffed out of its mouth and nose.

A one-meter long, razor-sharp horn jutted out from its snout, which emanated sparkling and translucent cold light.

Nie Tian’s heart tightened as he watched the Frost Armor Rhino speeding toward him faster and faster, its horn aimed directly at his chest. He felt as if his body had been infiltrated by the ice-cold wind, and was almost completely convinced that no matter how strong he was, once that horn pierced his chest, he would suffer severe injuries.

Behind the Frost Armor Rhino were numerous other spirit beasts, eyes emanating the cold light of hatred as they charged in Nie Tian’s direction.

“Heads up!” he said, chuckling as he backed away from the charging Frost Armor Rhino.

Considering the insane behavior of the eleven spirit beasts, Nie Tian didn’t have the slightest hope of killing them by himself.

He had to share the burden with trial takers from the Spiritual Treasure sect, and let everyone face the spirit beasts’ rage together.

The sudden appearance of the spirit beasts caused all of the other trial takers’ hearts to pound, and they began to shout.

“Eleven spirit beasts!”

“We’ve only just reached the edge of glacier area, and there are already eleven spirit beasts. It seems there are a lot more spirit beasts in the Green Illusion dimension than we thought!”

“Be careful, everybody! Prepare to fight!”

An Ying, Zheng Rui, and Pan Tao dashed out to stand in front of the other youngsters, although Nie Tian was still in the process of retreat.

An Ying was the most composed of all, seemingly completely calm as she unsheathed a long, crescent moon-shaped saber from her back.

Even as the saber left the sheath, tongues of scorching fire began to pulse off of the tip of the blade..

She raised the saber above her head and then gracefully swept it out in an arcing slash as she cried, “Assume formation!”

The trial takers had all trained with her previously, and immediately grouped together in a tight formation.

Within seconds, a cone-shaped battle formation appeared, with An Ying being at apex. By this time, Nie Tian reached them, and cried out. “I’ve lured out the spirit beasts. The rest is up to you guys. Hey, I only came to the Green Illusion dimension to broaden my view and gain experience. I don’t want to die in the first skirmish! I’m only at the sixth level of Qi Refining, far weaker than you all, so it’s only fair that you take care of those monsters.”

With these words, he passed by An Ying and arrived at the center of the formation, the safest point of all.

The Frost Armor Rhino had already locked onto Nie Tian, and thus continued to run in his direction. However, when it saw him merging into the group, it shifted its attention to An Ying, who was now at the forefront.

Considering that the Frost Armor Rhino was almost upon them, An Ying didn’t have the time to argue. Bracing herself, she spat, “What a wuss!”

From the moment the spirit beasts appeared and rushed towards Nie Tian, her focus had remained on him, mainly because she had been given the task of checking to see if there was something strange about Nie Tian or not.

When one's life was on the line, no one would hold back their secret weapon.

She had hope that Nie Tian would spare no effort to fight the Frost Armor Rhino, and that under her attentive observation, he would expose his secrets.

However, she could never have imagined that he would simply turn and run the instant he faced danger.

Nie Tian didn't intend to fight the Frost Armor Rhino at all. Instead, he diverted its attention to her.

Although she knew that Nie Tian's decision was the smartest one, she still held a grudge towards him for stealing her brother's trial slot, and continued to berate him for using cowardly and timid methods.

"What a coward!" she snapped. Then, she clenched her fist down onto the hilt of her saber, causing a one-meter-long blade of fiery light to burst out..

"Half-moon Slash!"

The one-meter-long blade of light then sped through the air toward the Frost Armor Rhino, a graceful crescent-moon shape backed by deadly power.

CRACK!

Shockingly, when the blade light slashed into the top of the the three-meter-long Frost Armor Rhino's head, its body was instantly ripped open, causing blood to spray out in all directions!

Furthermore, the Frost Armor Rhino's surging momentum couldn't be stopped, and its own momentum carried it forward so quickly that it was completely cut in half!

It wasn't until its horn was about half a meter away from An Ying that the two halves finally came to a stop and collapsed with a loud crash.

An intense smell of blood immediately rose up from the corpse, filling the entire battlefield.

From his position in the center of the group, Nie Tian watched An Ying's every move. Seeing that she managed to split the Frost Armor Rhino in half with just one slash, he felt deeply shocked. "What a fierce woman!"

Although the Frost Armor Rhino was a first grade beast, he was well aware that because of its thick skin and strong muscles, coupled with the layer of icy, translucent armor that covered its

body, its defenses were even more solid than steel.

The fact that An Ying could slaughter the Frost Armor Rhino, with a single strike at the ninth Qi Refining level, left Nie Tian deeply shocked.

His eyebrows twitched as he looked at her saber and murmured, “Such formidable power definitely doesn’t stem solely from her spiritual power, but rather...that spiritual tool. That saber is at least a Medium grade spiritual tool, which is completely compatible with her cultivation attribute. It must have accompanied her for many years.

“That’s the only way she could unleash the full power of the saber, and at the same time, completely release her own spiritual power!”

After coming to this conclusion, Nie Tian’s gaze turned slightly more grim.

In that same moment, An Ying cried, “Watch out! The spirit beasts are spreading out to flank us!”

Nie Tian had also noticed that after An Ying killed the Frost Armor Rhino in a single blow, the other spirit beasts behind it seemed to be terrified of her.

Instead of madly dashing towards her, they circled around to the sides of the formation to launch attacks on other trial takers.

“These spirit beasts are pretty smart,” murmured Nie Tian.

He still didn't have the slightest intention of fighting. Instead, he continued to examine the chaotic fighting going on between the spirit beasts and the trial takers, secretly assessing the balance of power between the two sides.

From his point of view, as long as An Ying was on their side with her powerful saber, the trial takers would undoubtedly win the battle.

There was no need for him to risk his life in the fighting.

The saber-wielding An Ying was apparently stronger than the spirit beasts, strong enough to determine the course of the battle.

Each and every one of the trial takers from various clans roared and brought out various spiritual tools that sparkled with precious light, while simultaneously preparing bizarre spiritual incantations and techniques of all kinds.

“Die!”

“Menial spirit beasts! How dare you attack us?! Die!”

“Kill them all!”



There was one young man with the same cultivation attribute as Nie Hong, but with a cultivation base at the eighth level of Qi Refining.

He wielded a dark-green metal ball, which caused thunderclaps to boom as it erupted with bolts of green lightning. His opponent, a huge silver spider, struggled in agony as they fought.

A baby-faced young woman let out a nervous whistle as she swung her sword, sending sharp wind blades into the fray.

Her target was a snow ape. Under her ferocious storm of wind blades, numerous chunks of flesh and fur were cut off of the ape's body.

As he watched attentively, Nie Tian muttered, "As expected, the clans they are from must be much more powerful than the Nie clan. These trial takers all have Medium grade spiritual tools with them. Every one of them has something extraordinary that conforms with their attribute. It seems... this battle really isn't mine to fight."

He noticed that Zheng Rui and Pan Tao, who were also from the Spiritual Treasure sect, had been fighting effortlessly beside An Ying. Apparently this battle was extremely easy to them.

"From the look of it, the safest option would be to stick with them until they run into the second grade python. "

After gaining a clearer understanding of the situation, Nie Tian seemed to relax a bit. He shrunk back into the cone shaped battle formation, refraining from uttering even a single word, as he deliberately tried to make the other trial takers forget about his existence.

However, not everyone forgot about him...

Zheng Rui, who was fighting beside An Ying, unexpectedly withdrew to the center. “Nie Tian! This battle puts all of us in danger. Do you really want to stand around doing nothing?!”

With a cold glance at Nie Tian, he kicked his foot towards Nie Tian, hoping to force him out of the center of the formation to face the spirit beasts on the other side.

Before they had all entered the Green Illusion dimension, Zheng Rui already understood An Ying’s implication, and began to resent Nie Tian, the outsider.

When everyone was fighting, he saw Nie Tian hiding and observing unconcernedly in the center of the group. Therefore, he felt increasingly annoyed, and didn’t want it to be so easy for him.

“We’re fighting an intense battle, and you think you can just sit back and watch? Get out there!!” Pan Tao also lifted his foot and threw a kick towards Nie Tian.

# Chapter 39: The Inner Conflict!

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Zheng Rui and Pan Tao were no ordinary disciples of the Spiritual Treasure sect. Their parents and grandparents were high ranking officials of the sect.

Being mere disciples in that sect was enough for them to show off their strength amongst the trial takers, let alone the fact that they had powerful seniors supporting them.

On the other hand, Nie Tian was an outsider, not even from the clans that were affiliated with the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Both Zheng Rui and Pan Tao were too powerful and lofty to spare Nie Tian a second glance.

Therefore, they had no qualms about berating and ordering him about.

Having acted compliantly up to this point, Nie Tian finally showed his true colors.

“Talk if you want,” he said from his position about three meters behind An Ying, “but keep your hands and feet to yourselves!”

With that, he lifted his foot in a flash.

BANG! BANG!

Nie Tian's foot met Zheng Rui's and Pan Tao's feet in quick succession, causing muffled booms to ring out.

Zheng Rui and Pan Tao immediately felt a tremendous force spreading up their legs.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

To their surprise, both of them were sent back several steps, causing them to stagger into a crowd of spirit beasts.

In distinct contrast, Nie Tian only shuddered slightly before standing there as still as a rock.

However, Zheng Rui and Pan Tao were disoriented as they were suddenly thrown into the fray, and had to immediately deal with the two spirit beasts that had jumped onto them. After they forced the two spirit beasts into retreat, they immediately glowered at Nie Tian with bloodshot eyes.

Zheng Rui's eyes and face were immediately filled with surging fury. Looking almost as if he intended to eat Nie Tian alive, he shouted, "How dare you fight back!"

After fighting off his enemy, Pan Tao also glared at Nie Tian with an expression of disbelief. "You freaking dare to get physical with us?"

The rest of the trial takers also diverted part of their attention, continuing to fight the spirit beasts, yet looking over to see what was going on between the three of them.

When they saw Nie Tian responding strongly to Zheng Rui and Pan Tao's provocative actions, all of them were shocked and looked at Nie Tian as if they were looking at a freak.

Even they, members of the Spiritual Treasure sect's subordinate clans, dared not disobey the orders of Zheng Rui and Pan Tao. All of them had served the two cautiously so far, fearing that the slightest fault could cause trouble.

As for Nie Tian, he was nothing but a member of the Nie clan from Black Cloud City, which according to the rumors... had really gone downhill in the recent years.

Even these trial takers from other clans didn't take Nie Tian seriously, and had been trying to find an opportunity to make fun of him.

They didn't believe that Nie Tian would dare to rebel against them, much less have the audacity to insult Pan Tao and Zheng Rui. Despite the inherent danger of the situation, he even responded to them with direct brute force.

"So what if I feel like fighting back?" Nie Tian said, glancing at the two of them out of the corner of his eye. Without the slightest bit of respect, he continued, "It's all thanks to sister An's help that I'm here in the Green Illusion dimension. She's the only one I owe

anything to. When Miss An Ying said unpleasant things to me, I didn't bicker with her out of respect for her sister."

"Who the hell are you two? Why do I have to give you face?"

With these words, Nie Tian waved his hands, and recklessly continued, "I came to the Green Illusion dimension to broaden my view. I don't care a bit about the spirit beasts and the Heaven Comprehending Pill. Come on. If you want to resolve things, just bring it on then! So what if you're in the ninth level of Qi Refining? I actually do want to see for myself how good you are!"

This wouldn't be his first time fighting with those who had a superior cultivation base.

As a matter of fact, he had fought opponents with superior cultivation bases his whole life!

Nie Hong and Nie Yuan from the Nie clan, and Yun Song from the Yun clan, all of them were eventually beaten soundly by Nie Tian.

Nowadays, after having been baptized by the dense spiritual energy of the flamecloud mine, he had already entered the sixth level of Qi Refining, and had always firmly believed in his physical strength.

Moreover, he had come to understand that unique raging fist strike from the mysterious land, which made him confident

enough to face an opponent in the ninth level of Qi Refining.

Therefore, he felt no fear of Zheng Rui and Pan Tao!

All the surrounding trial takers couldn't help but clamor.

“How arrogant of him!”

“Is this guy really from the Nie clan?”

“He dares to provoke a fight with Zheng Rui and Pan Tao from the Spiritual Treasure sect. Does he want to die?”

Every one of them, thanks to their precious spiritual tools, had significant advantages when fighting the spirit beasts, and because of that, they were able to divert part of their attention to watch the quarrel between Nie Tian, Zheng Rui, and Pan Tao, and even make comments. As if it weren't chaotic enough.

As teenagers, not only did they do nothing to stop the conflict, they actually hoped the scene would grow bigger.

The main reason was that the spirit beasts were too weak to threaten their safety.

As the leader, An Ying had long since noticed the conflict between the three, but didn't say anything.

She had originally assumed that the pressure from Zheng Rui and Pan Tao would have convinced Nie Tian to fight the spirit beasts with the rest of the group.

Never did she expect that Nie Tian would not only rebel, but fight back violently.

“I don’t think that either Zheng Rui or Pan Tao used their inner spiritual power. I’m only not sure about Nie Tian, though. If he didn’t either...” She glanced over at Nie Tian, wondering about his true strength and what was about to happen next.

She didn’t consider any of the low-grade spirit beasts around her as worthy opponents; in her view, even without the group of three, the rest of the trial takers were capable of killing all the spirit beasts.

Having such confidence, as the commander, she didn’t stop them, but rather let the situation continue to develop.

Zheng Rui let out a bellow, and backed off from his fight with the spirit beast. “Brother Tao, go ahead and help them kill off these annoying spirit beasts. I’ve had enough with this punk!” Step by step, he walked slowly towards Nie Tian.

As of this moment, An Ying could tell that Zheng Rui had become truly mad, and thus warned him, “There are rules in the Green Illusion dimension. One cannot take another’s life.”



However, although her words seemed like a warning, they actually served as an incitement.

“Of course, I know the rules!” Zheng Rui said, grinning. “Relax, I won’t kill him! But mark my words. His trial in the Green Illusion dimension has come to an end!”

Apparently, Zheng Rui intended to seriously injure Nie Tian.

“That depends on how good you are!” said Nie Tian with a composed smile.

He truly doubted that Zheng Rui was strong enough to hurt him.

At this very moment, the ground beneath the feet of the young man with the dark-green metal ball suddenly rose up into the air!

As soon as the ground started trembling beneath him, he subconsciously looked down at the ground, and then immediately let out a sharp shriek.

A giant, grayish-brown lizard suddenly scuttled out from the ground under his feet!

Before the young man could launch any lightning attacks with the metal ball, the lizard had already swallowed his legs with its huge mouth.

CRUNCH!

An extremely loud and cracking sound echoed out from his legs.

Even as a wail of pain escaped his mouth, the lizard's bit upwards at his waist.

Instantly, blood spurted out of his waist and abdominal area, and the light in his eyes began to fade.

The dark-green metal ball fell to the icy ground beside him, as his grip weakened and finally grew completely slack.

The surrounding teenagers' eyes went wide, and they howled madly, waving spiritual tools as they attempted to bombard the lizard.

“Qin Shun!”

Shockingly, after killing the young man with its deadly bite, the lizard shrunk down and disappeared into the ground again.

As the commander, An Ying's eyes suddenly turned bright red. With a mad hack of her saber, she split apart the nearest first grade spirit beast and yelled, “The Lurker Lizard! That was the second grade Lurker Lizard! Why did it show up here?”

She knew very well that there were only four second grade spirit

beasts left in the entire Green Illusion dimension, and that the Lurker Lizard was one of them!

However, the glacier area where they were standing had always been the Frost Python's turf, whereas the Lurker Lizard's territory was normally the desert beyond the glacier area.

Their original plan was to slaughter the Frost Python in the glacier area, and after a few days of rest and reorganization, they would then proceed to the desert to hunt down the Lurker Lizard.

An Ying definitely wasn't prepared to confront the Lurker Lizard in the glacier area.

"Zheng Rui! Pan Tao!" she called out anxiously. "Put your personal grudges aside for the moment and help me kill the Lurker Lizard!"

She was afraid that the Frost Python, another second grade spirit beast, was also in the vicinity.

The four second grade spirit beasts in the Green Illusion dimension had formidable strength that was comparable to Qi warriors at the early stage of Lesser Heaven. If there were only one of them, she had the confidence to kill it with Zheng Rui and Pan Tao's help.

However, if they had to deal with the Frost Python and the Lurker Lizard at the same time, she had no idea what might

happen.

By this point, she could no longer afford to let Zheng Rui test Nie Tian's secret. All she wanted was to finish off the Lurker Lizard as quickly as possible, in case the Frost Python appeared.

Unfortunately, it was at this point that her worst fears came true.

HISSS!

The python's call came from behind a strangely-shaped, translucent, ice-covered tree.

The python was more than ten meters long, as thick as a man's waist, and silvery-white in color. Almost as soon as its hiss echoed out, it appeared in front of everyone

"Oh, no!" An Ying's expression changed drastically.

# Chapter 40: First Display Of Talent

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Unexpectedly, the Frost Python and the Lurker Lizard showed up at the same time!

The moment those young trial takers heard the hissing sound of the Frost Python, their faces all turned pale.

Even Zheng Rui and Pan Tao also panicked.

Nie Tian's expression turned grim, and he became more focused than ever, no longer in any sort of mood to quarrel with Zheng Rui.

After Qin Shun's death, the sudden emergence of the Lurker Lizard, and the appearance of the Frost Python, Nie Tian realized his journey to the Green Illusion dimension would not be as simple as he had pictured it.

An Ying took a deep breath to calm down, and then said decisively, "Zheng Rui! Pan Tao! You deal with the Lurker Lizard! As for the Frost Python... leave it to me!"

Everyone could hear the lack of confidence in her voice.

"No way!" shouted Zheng Rui. "You definitely can't handle the Frost Python alone!"

“Zheng Rui and I will kill the Frost Python,” Pan Tao chimed in. “You handle the Lurker Lizard!”

Long before they embarked upon their journey, they had heard from their seniors that the Frost Python was the most powerful spirit beast in the Green Illusion dimension.

Otherwise, its head wouldn’t be the only item that could be used to exchange for the Heaven Comprehending Pill.

Both Zheng Rui and Pan Tao were fully aware that An Ying was slightly stronger than them.

However, they were all at the ninth level of Qi Refining, and cultivators from the Spiritual Treasure sect, so they knew very well that An Ying was only stronger by a bit. If they collaborated, they would be able to defeat An Ying.

By telling them to fight the Lurker Lizard, and facing the stronger Frost Python herself, An Ying was clearly putting herself in great danger.

They couldn’t accept such a plan!

In the middle of their conversation, Zheng Rui and Pan Tao exchanged glances and instantly agreed to overtake An Ying and fight the Frost Python, which had just appeared.

“I am the commander! Do as I say!” An Ying, cried, sounding

both furious and charming at the same time. She raised her long saber high in the air, stopping the two from approaching. “I know I can’t kill the Frost Python, but at least I can stall it! I will buy enough time for the both of you to kill the Lurker Lizard!

“Once the lizard is dead, you can come over and help me slaughter the Frost Python!

“If we switch targets, none of us will be able to finish the battle in a short time. If the fight drags on, none of us will be able to make it out of the Green Illusion dimension alive!”

“But, it’s not fair for us to let you stall the Frost Python on your own,” Zheng Rui said anxiously. “You’ll probably...”

What An Ying said next was spoken with a decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron, “If you truly worry about my safety, hold nothing back! Kill that Lurker Lizard as fast as possible! As long as it dies quickly, I’ll be fine!”

“Okay!” shouted Pan Tao, eyes reddened. “We’ll follow your instructions!”

The baby-faced girl clenched her short sword in hand and looked over at An Ying. “Elder sister Ying,” she said on the verge of tears, “you... you must be careful!”

She had been good friends with Qin Shun, who had died right next to her. The moment he was killed by the Lurker Lizard, she

panicked.

All the teenagers who were attending the Green Illusion dimension's trial looked slightly older than their actual age, due to the fact that they had started cultivation at early ages. At first glance, they seemed like a group of fifteen-year-olds or sixteen-year-olds.

However the truth was that they were only twelve or thirteen.

In fact, that girl had just turned twelve this year. In her clan, she had always been protected like a princess, and this was her first time to experience such a cruel battle.

Obviously, she hadn't adapted.

Other than the three from the Spiritual Treasure sect, the rest of the trial takers from the various clans had all quieted down after Qin Shun's death.

Their eyes all flickered with the light of fear and anxiety, especially after the Frost Python showed up.

In fact, the appearance of the Frost Python turned the fear in their eyes into desperation!

The only exception was Nie Tian, who had argued with Zheng Rui earlier.



Several months ago, Nie Tian had went through an even more desperate situation outside of Black Cloud City.

He would never be able to forget that experience for the rest of his life. Back then, he eventually burned the two powerful experts to ashes with the animal bone's frightening power.

Nie Tian had long since surpassed his peers in terms of resilience, and after killing those two, had become even more resolute and unwavering.

Although he could do nothing to win the battle in front of him, he did not panic, nor did he show fear.

Fearless, he managed to keep a clear mind and concentrate his attention.

This was the reason that he was the first to discover an abnormal change!

Next to the baby-faced girl, a level stretch of land began to bulge upward slightly.

Overwhelmed by fear, the girl was staring blankly at An Ying, completely unaware of such a subtle change in the ground.

She couldn't possibly have expected the Lurker Lizard would

emerge so close to her again, after it had just killed Qin Shun right next to her.

She was still completely focused on An Ying's words of consolation.

At this moment, Zheng Rui and Pan Tao, who previously attempted to overtake An Ying, had just stopped their argument with An Ying and had yet to turn around.

“Get out of the way!” Nie Tian bellowed, startling everyone, who immediately lay their eyes on him.

Under everyone's astonished gaze, Nie Tian shot up into the air like a human rocket!

The spiritual power in his dantian's spiritual sea instantly converged into his right leg!

Nie Tian flew high up over the girl's head, and like a plummeting meteor, slammed with full force onto that bulging piece of icy land beside her!

BOOM!

A muffled sound of a collision came from the icy ground. To Nie Tian, it felt as if he had exerted all his strength to stomp onto a giant rubber ball.

Afterwards, his momentum reversed, and he actually sprung up high into the air.

ROOOAARRRR!!

All of a sudden, a fierce growl exploded from underground, a cry that clearly came from the Lurker Lizard.

“Ahhh!!!!” Only at this moment did the baby-faced girl understand what was happening.

Rattled, she lurched forward and attacked with her sword, creating sharp wind blades that pierced into the icy ground beside her.

CHING! CHING!

Streaks of bright light suddenly shot out from the icy ground, emanating in all directions.

Suppressing their terror, the entire group howled and dashed towards the spot where the Lurker Lizard was about to emerge.

“The Lurker Lizard!”

“It was the Lurker Lizard again!”

“The kid from the Nie clan found its trail!”

“If it weren’t for him, Jiang Miao would already be dead in the jaws of the Lurker Lizard, just like Qin Shun.”

However, after its attack was foiled, the Lurker Lizard vanished into the earth once again.

When the trial takers reached Jiang Miao’s side, they discovered nothing.

On the other hand, after landing back on the ground, Nie Tian panted heavily and said, “Are you people really that scared? If you think we can’t win, why don’t you just kill yourselves so that you don’t get eaten by the Lurker Lizard and the Frost Python”

Surprisingly, no one had a single thing to say in response to his rebuke.

All the trial takers suddenly became silent, staring at Nie Tian, who was already adjusting his breaths, preparing for another strike.

Fortunately, due to the appearance of the Frost Python, the spirit beasts that had been attacking them previously weren’t in a hurry to launch another round of attacks.

Moreover, the Frost Python seemed surprisingly patient, and was taking its time to approach them.

Because of that, the crowd had the time to process Nie Tian's words and reassess the dangerous situation they were in.

"He is right." An Ying said, breaking the silence. "The situation we are in might be the worst we've ever met in our lives! However, the purpose of this trial was to train ourselves, and we should have the courage to face a desperate fight!"

"Relax, everyone! A second grade spirit beast isn't as formidable as you think!"

"As long as I can keep the Frost Python occupied while Zheng Rui and Pan Tao kill the Lurker Lizard, we can turn the situation around and eventually defeat the Frost Python!"

"I have full confidence that I can buy them enough time!"

"What's more, I want you to kill off those first grade spirit beasts as fast as possible, and take some burden off of Zheng Rui, Pan Tao, and me afterwards."

"Please trust me! And trust yourselves!"

Nie Tian immediately noticed that the fear in the trial takers' eyes was slowly replaced by courage and bloodlust, all thanks to the inspiration provided by An Ying.

He couldn't help but cast an admiring glance in her direction.

At the same time, to his surprise, An Ying glanced back at him from afar, a similar expression in her eyes.

Grinning, he waved and called out, "Good luck."

"You too," answered An Ying.

# Chapter 41: Iceclaw Monkey

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The baby-faced girl was still seized by shock. Clutching her sword tightly, she timidly said, “Thank you, Nie Tian.”

“My name is Jiang Miao. I’m from Dim Star City, which isn’t far from Black Cloud City. Whenever you’re in town, I’d love to show you around.”

Nie Tian grinned back at her. “You’re at the eighth level of Qi Refining, and that sword of yours... is also a rare tool. As long as you focus on fighting and pay close attention to what’s happening beneath your feet, you should be able to detect the movement of the Lurker Lizard. You’d better be more careful from now on, and don’t let your mind wander any more.”

Jiang Miao nodded her head vigorously. “Yes, I will.”

HISSS!

At this moment, another strange sound rang out from behind the Frost Python.

Pan Tao’s expression flickered. “I can’t believe there are more spirit beasts!”

As he spoke, ten more first grade spirit beasts showed up from behind the Frost Python, one after another.

They were mostly snake-type spirit beasts that likely appeared because of the summons from the Frost Python.

The moment they appeared, Nie Tian understood why the Frost Python had been taking its time to make a move.

It was waiting for the arrival of its lackeys!

Originally, the trial takers had outnumbered the first grade spirit beasts in this region. Furthermore, the juniors from various clans all had outstanding spiritual tools in their hands, which had given them the upper hand in the fighting.

That was why they were able to spare some attention to watch the conflict between Nie Tian and Zheng Rui.

However, the appearance of this additional wave of spirit beasts meant that they would all have to face two to three first grade spirit beasts.

In that case, no matter how powerful their spiritual tools were, they wouldn't be able to finish the fight within a short time.

The mere appearance of the Frost Python had ensured that the trial takers would lose their advantage.

Their only hope had been that An Ying could keep the Frost Python occupied while the rest of them finished off their opponents, and that they could subsequently help An Ying



slaughter the Frost Python.

However, with another wave of spirit beasts coming, it seemed their last remaining hope was gone.

HISSSSS!

The Frost Python hissed, and cast them an ice-cold glare, which... appeared to be filled with a gleam of ridicule.

After waiting patiently for so long, the moment the snake-kind spirit beasts gathered around it, it finally decided to make a move.

An Ying now clearly understood the situation, and knew that their cowardice and hesitation had cost them their best opportunity.

“Dammit! We should have attacked earlier!

“We can’t wait any longer!” She looked down anxiously at the ice-cold ground. “ For all we know, there are even more spirit beasts rushing over from other regions!”

According to her knowledge, the Lurker Lizard, being a second grade spirit beast, also possessed the ability to summoning low-ranking spirit beasts, although she was unsure of whether it had actually done so yet.

Perhaps, spirit beasts from the desert... were charging toward them at this very moment.

She didn't dare to waste any more time.

WHOOSH!

Clusters of burning flames suddenly shot out from within her crimson curved blade. Once they left the blade, they continuously altered their shape in the midair, and eventually turned into a stream of lava-like flame.

In a flash, six streams of flame formed in front of An Ying.

Emitting a blazing fire, they intertwined with each other, forming a faint yet complicated pattern of flame.

“Flame Stream Formation!”

All of a sudden, An Ying raised her long saber high up in the air, and then pointed its tip towards the Frost Python.

WHOOSH!

The intertwined pattern of raging flames that had been floating in midair suddenly flew towards the Frost Python.

As it began to move, An Ying dashed forward, holding her long saber in hand.

The ten-meter-long Frost Python cast a cold glare at her, before throwing its head back and opening its gigantic mouth.

Suddenly, a beam of light as thick as the python's body shot out of its mouth, straight up into the air, where it slammed into the enormous flame formation.

The moment the frost power met the flame power, they immediately sent millions of sparks flying out in all directions, filling up the entire sky.

Also at that very moment, Nie Tian let out another shout. "Everyone, attack! She's buying us time!"

Upon hearing his words, the mesmerized trial takers suddenly snapped back to reality.

Nie Tian, on the other hand, didn't waste his time watching the battle between An Ying and the Frost Python, but instead dashed towards the spirit beast that was closest to him, his face grim.

It was an Iceclaw Monkey, which had a pair of sharp claws and silver fur covering its entire body.

The Iceclaw Monkey was a first grade spirit beast, known for its agility, but possessing only a pair of sharp claws, which emanated

a cold light, as its weapons.

Its favorite target was the neck and face area, and especially the eyes!

EEK! EEK!

Upon seeing Nie Tian running madly towards it, the Iceclaw Monkey let out a sharp screech before it blurred into action, snaking across the battlefield towards Nie Tian.

It didn't move in a straight line, but rather in a serpentine motion.

Right before it was about to engage with Nie Tian, it stabbed its sharp claws into the ground, and then raised them violently up a moment later.

Numerous chunks of ice and snow were thrown into the air, which broke into even smaller fragments, forming a cloud of ice shards, and temporarily blocking Nie Tian's line of sight.

A moment later, a silver shadow suddenly appeared behind Nie Tian. When the shadow became clear, it was the Iceclaw Monkey.

With full force, it stabbed its razor-sharp claws towards the back of Nie Tian's neck.

The neck is one of the most vulnerable part on a human body, and were it to be pierced by claws, it would result in almost instant death for most people.

Clearly, the monkey knew the weak spots of the human body very well.

EEK! EEK!

In the moment before its sharp claws were on the verge of making contact with Nie Tian's neck, it finally let out a sharp, complacent screech.

“Looking to die?!”

Nie Tian snorted coldly. It almost seemed as if he had grown a pair of eyes on the back of his head; he reached both hands behind him and grabbed the Iceclaw Monkey's furry wrists with incomparable precision.

The Iceclaw Monkey shrieked as it was forcefully swung over Nie Tian's head.

Nie Tian clenched its wrists tightly, stopping it from making another vicious attack. Then, he kicked the Iceclaw Monkey in the chest.

With this kick, not only did he use his full physical force, but he also drew power from his spiritual sea.

BANG! CRACK!

The Iceclaw Monkey' torso was immediately launched into the air, without its arms!

Nie Tian didn't bother to look at the screaming Iceclaw Monkey, but instead turned the skinny and shriveled monkey arms around to examine them.

With the sharp claws facing outwards, he then decided to use them as weapons on the nearest spirit beast!

He knew after losing its arms, the Iceclaw Monkey would no longer be a threat.

Even if it was still alive, it wouldn't be able to have an impact on the outcome of the battle.

WHOOSH!

Once again, the Lurker Lizard suddenly emerged from under the ground.

At this time, a young man named Zu Fang was caught up in the middle of a fierce fight with a giant spider, and thus when the Lurker Lizard emerged and attacked again, he wasn't able to respond.

KA! CHA!

The Lurker Lizard shattered his leg bones with one bite. Because of the intense pain, he no longer had the strength to handle huge spider. A moment later, the spider's sharp claws pierced through his chest and abdomen.

Pan Tao and Zheng Rui, who had been searching for the Lurker Lizard, immediately dashed in his direction, yelling his name. "Zu Fang!"

Unfortunately, they were too late.

By the time they arrived by his side, Zu Fang had already stopped breathing; the spider, knowing that it was no match for two new enemies, immediately took to flight.

"Dammit!" Pan Tao's eyes turned red. "The Lurker Lizard hides itself beneath the surface, yet it can perceive the course of the battle, and launches sneak attacks on us when we are distracted by our enemies! As long as it lurks underground, we won't be able to locate it and kill it!"

Irritated, Zheng Rui shouted, "We must think of a way, fast! An Ying... won't be able to hold on for much longer!"

Noticing one more person had died, Nie Tian didn't panic. Instead he checked An Ying's situation, while simultaneously

listening in on Zheng Rui and Pan Tao's conversation.

His expression immediately turned very grim.

“This doesn't look good!”



## Chapter 42: Were I Wrong, Take My Life!

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The enormous flame formation above An Ying's head had been completely shattered by the frosty light beam!

Nie Tian noted that the rich, white frost mist in the surrounding area had been gradually gathered to that beam of frosty light.

This was the glacier area of the Green Illusion dimension, the habitat of the Frost Python. With its second grade cultivation, the Frost Python was even able to draw power from the freezing spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth to increase the power of its beam of frosty light.

Because of the freezing spiritual energy, the beam was bolstered, growing longer and thicker!

On the other hand, An Ying became more and more exhausted because of the wastage of power and energy.

HISSSSS!

After destroying An Ying's flame formation with its frosty light beam, the Frost Python slowly slithered towards her.

Even though Nie Tian was a hundred meters away, he was able to see the frustration and fear in An Ying's eyes.

It seemed she knew that she wouldn't be able to last much longer.

She had placed all her hope in Zheng Rui and Pan Tao, and yet they hadn't found any trace of the Lurker Lizard.

Nie Tian had a clear understanding of the situation, and he knew that the key to surviving this fierce battle was An Ying successfully stalling the Frost Python.

If An Ying died, and the Frost Python crashed into their battle formation, the trial takers who had been fighting the first grade spirit beasts would all be killed instantly.

If it came down to that, Nie Tian himself would have no hope of escaping, and would also fall prey to the spirit beasts.

"This won't work." With a grim look in his eyes, he racked in his brain for a way to turn the extremely dangerous situation around.

Of course, from the moment the Frost Python showed up with the Lurker Lizard, he realized that in order to live, he had to cooperate with An Ying and others.

For this reason, he didn't hesitate in the slightest to jump in and save Jiang Miao.

Although he still detested Zheng Rui and Pan Tao, he also knew that they were of great importance in this battle.

Zheng Rui and Pan Tao were the strongest besides An Ying, and could take the pressure off of the rest of the group so that the Lurker Lizard wouldn't dare to go around and kill more of them.

Nie Tian suddenly said, "The pressure on An Ying is too great. One of you has to go help her!"

Pan Tao was puzzled and froze for a moment. "Are you talking to us?"

Zheng Rui grew irritated and said angrily, "Who do you think you are? Our task is to kill the Lurker Lizard. We know exactly what to do. No need for you to worry!"

"Kill the Lurker Lizard?" Nie Tian laughed coldly. "You can't even find it. How can you kill it? You are only wasting your time here! If it doesn't come out, are you just going to continue waiting until An Ying gets killed by the Frost Python?!"

Zheng Rui was about to retort when Pan Tao waved his hand, signaling him not to argue with Nie Tian. "Do you have any better suggestions?"

Nie Tian understood that An Ying had been in an extremely dangerous situation, and therefore said as quickly as he could, "Zheng Rui, you go help An Ying. Pan Tao, you stay here and defend. If the Lurker Lizard dares to emerge again, Zheng Rui can always come back and help. I believe that when the Lurker Lizard appears, I'll be able to shoulder some of the burden for you, and

buy us enough time for Zheng Rui to return.

“Time is of the essence, An Ying won’t be able to last much longer. You need to make up your mind now!”

Unlike Zheng Rui, Pan Tao was able to look at the bigger picture, and make the wisest decisions at critical moments.

Therefore, Nie Tian addressed him alone.

Pan Tao took a deep breath and firmly said, “Zheng Rui, listen to him. Go help An Ying! Don’t worry about me. If that Lurker Lizard dares to emerge, I can hold out for at least five or ten minutes!”

Just as Zheng Rui was deliberating, Nie Tian bellowed, “Do you think An Ying can afford for you to waste any more time?!”

As they spoke, Zheng Rui snuck a glance at An Ying, and realized that An Ying couldn’t hold off the Frost Python’s raging attacks any longer. He gritted his teeth, glared at Nie Tian, and said, “If anything happens to Brother Tao, I won’t let you off!”

Finally, he bolted towards An Ying at the fastest speed possible.

On the other hand, Nie Tian had long since stopped fighting the first grade spirit beasts.

He knew very well that the crucial factors in turning the

situation around were the Lurker Lizard and the Frost Python.

Especially the Lurker Lizard!

Ever since it burst out from under the ground and killed Zu Fang, the trial takers' moves had become somewhat hesitant.

They would constantly look down at the ground beneath their feet, afraid that the Lurker Lizard might suddenly emerge and kill them.

Although the Lurker Lizard hadn't showed up for a while, it was still like a ticking time bomb beneath the ground that could go off any moment.

With such a huge threat lurking in the shadows, every one of the trial takers moved as if they were fighting on thin ice. They all feared that they could be the next Zu Fang.

"Calm down. We have to find the Lurker Lizard."

Nie Tian kept adjusting his breathing. After mentally casting aside the life-threatening nature of the situation, he concentrated on the icy ground beneath his feet.

"Calm down, calm... down..."

He forced himself to relax so that he could better detect any

unusual movement underneath the ground.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP...

He didn't even realize that during the process, his heart rate had become slower and slower.

Even his body temperature had dropped significantly.

Shortly after, he found that his entire body had become cold, and his blood flow had become extremely slow, just like his heartbeat.

However, his senses had been augmented significantly, enabling him to perceive the changes in the surrounding spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth, the fluctuations of the trial takers' spiritual power, and every breath of the spirit beasts.

Whenever the trial takers or the spirit beasts moved, their feet landed on the ground, creating vibrating waves that he could sense through the soles of his feet.

He was secretly surprised by his newly-discovered enhanced perception. In order to get a better feel for the slight vibrations, he took off his shoes and socks and stood barefoot on the cold and hard icy land.

Shedding the two layers of obstruction and standing there barefooted enabled him to feel every vibration of the ground even more clearly.

On the intense battlefield, he suddenly closed his eyes, focusing all his psychic power onto his feet.

He focused his heart on sensing even the most trivial vibrations.

All of sudden, he experienced a mysterious sensation, as if his soul were transcending his body and going out into the open.

It seemed as though strands of his psychic awareness had penetrated the ground from the bottom of his feet, and started to roam about in the underground world.

In that moment, he felt as though there were a dozen versions of himself cutting through the dark space underneath the ground.

It felt like his hands were reaching out into pitch-black darkness, trying to find something...

When his psychic awareness wandered to where the trial takers and the spiritual beasts were, he was able to hear the ear-piercing sounds of their footfalls.

The sounds should have been weak and hard to perceive, but with his psychic awareness, they became as loud as thunderclaps.

Moreover, he could quickly tell which sounds came from the trial takers and the spirit beasts.

Therefore, his psychic awareness filtered out those sounds and continued to search in other directions.

He searched with great patience...

Pan Tao, who was constantly shifting about to observe the icy land around them, quickly noticed his strange behavior.

It was the most crucial moment of the battle, yet Nie Tian didn't join them, but rather took off his shoes and socks, closed his eyes, and adopted an attitude that seemed as though he was courting death.

Pan Tao took a closer look, and then subconsciously moved closer to him, fearing that he would be killed by the nearby spirit beasts.

Right after Nie Tian had saved Jiang Miao and provided some reasonable suggestions, Pan Tao had come to view him as a true member of the team.

Since he trusted that Nie Tian would never jeopardize their safety, and that he must be helping the team in his own way, Pan Tao viewed protecting Nie Tian as his responsibility.

“What a strange dude!” grumbled Pan Tao, yet he kept watch for Nie Tian, secretly preparing himself to fight off the spirit beasts that had been wandering near them.



As of this moment, strands of Nie Tian's psychic awareness, which had been roaming the underground world, suddenly sensed a strong sign of life!

“The Lurker Lizard!”

Nie Tian violently opened his eyes, and aimed at a spot according to his previous probing.

Just as he was about to make a move, he was suddenly taken over by fatigue, and discovered that he had been completely depleted of energy, as if he hadn't slept in seven days.

He immediately realized that he had drained his energy by channeling his psychic awareness underneath the ground and searching for a trace of the Lurker Lizard.

Clearly he was now in no position to effectively fight the Lurker Lizard and make it pay.

He pointed at a teenager who was fighting a Frost Armor Rhino, and shouted urgently at Pan Tao, “Pan Tao! Over there! Behind Tong Hao! The Lurker Lizard is beneath the icy land one and a half meters behind him! Go! Attack that piece of icy land with full force! Please trust me!”

Pan Tao was shocked. “Are you sure?!”

With a pale face, Nie Tian nodded vigorously and urged again,

“I’ll kill myself if I’m wrong!”

Pan Tao was stunned.

“Hurry up!” Nie Tian roared.

Pan Tao hesitated no more. He hefted his long golden spear in hand, blurring into action, and arriving behind Tong Hao in blink of an eye.

His long spear suddenly emanated a brilliant golden light, so bright that Nie Tian couldn’t help but close his eyes!

POOFF!

After closing his eyes, he heard the sound of the spear piercing into the ground.

In the next moment, the Lurker Lizard’s mad cry came from underneath that piece of icy land.

## Chapter 43: Settling The Victory

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Dark-green blood spewed violently out from the crack the golden spear had opened up in the ground.

At the same time, the Lurker Lizard's ear-piercing shriek rang out from the depths below.

The land began to shake violently; clearly, the Lurker Lizard's thirst for blood had been spurred, and it was about to tear through the ground to the surface.

Pan Tao had more battle experience than Jiang Miao and others. The moment he saw the blood spilling out from under the ground, he knew that Nie Tian's judgement had been completely correct!

Ecstasy stretched across his face, and at the same time, his black pupils suddenly turned dark-gold!

His hands suddenly exploded with a wave of enormous spiritual power fluctuations as he pulled out the spear and vigorously pierced it back into the earth.

The long spear once again flashed with golden light, forcing Nie Tian to close his eyes.

CHING!

The spear's earth-piercing sound rang out again, and the pained howls of the Lurker Lizard could once again be heard.

“Haha! Finally, I’ve got you!”

Pan Tao, after succeeding in both his attacks, grinned from ear to ear. More confident, he pulled out the spear one more time and prepared for a third attack.

However, after being hit twice, the Lurker Lizard finally realized that its whereabouts had been exposed.

Wounded, it immediately sank further down into the earth, sapped its will to fight Pan Tao.

“Yee?!”

Pan Tao’s face was full of disbelief as looked at the bulge in the ground rapidly making its way off into the distance.

The second grade Lurker Lizard was intelligent enough that it wouldn’t dare to continue fighting after having its body pierced twice.

Although Pao Tao had been prepared for the opposite, the Lurker Lizard actually fled!

Pan Tao got extremely excited, cheering loudly while brandishing

his golden spear. “Zheng Rui! You don’t have to come any more. The Lurker Lizard has fled! Hahaha! It actually fled!”

Upon hearing his words, all the teenagers who had previously feared that the Lurker Lizard might sneak up on them from under the ground, were immediately filled with strength and spirit.

Without the threat of the Lurker Lizard, they no longer had to worry about attacks on their flank, and finally became full of courage!

Nie Tian noticed that none of them were looking down anymore, and instead went all-out against the spirit beasts in front of them.

“What! The Lurker Lizard has fled?” Zheng Rui, who had gone to help An Ying fight the Frost Python, grew excited as well. “Brother Tao! Well done! If we can escape death this time, it will be all thanks to you! Hahaha, you’re so awesome, bro! Respect!”

After Zheng Rui had joined her, An Ying was no longer in sore straits, and actually could spare some time to take a glance at Pan Tao.

Even though she didn’t know what exactly had happened, she was confident that Pan Tao wouldn’t lie, and since he said the Lurker Lizard had fled, it must be true.

The fact that Pan Tao was able to defeat the Lurker Lizard totally surpassed her expectations, and she was sincerely happy that he

had managed to do that.

“Pan Tao, I didn’t know you had it in you. Good job!” She was quite generous with her praises.

Jiang Miao’s cheek blushed with excitement. “Big Bro Pan! You are amazing! It’s all thanks to you if we win!”

Elated, the rest of the teenagers also started shouting out, praising Pan Tao in every possible way.

“You are truly worthy of being a disciple of the Spiritual Treasure sect, Biggest Bro Pan! Much respect!”

“Thank you, Big Bro Pan!”

“... ”

Immersed in an earful of praises, Pan Tao smiled in embarrassment, and subconsciously cast a glance at Nie Tian.

He knew more than anyone that Nie Tian had played the most crucial role in this, and it was only because of him he was able to severely wound the Lurker Lizard.

If Nie Tian hadn’t provided an accurate location, he would never be able to catch the Lurker Lizard off guard and inflict such incalculable damage on it, forcing it to escape.

The Lurker Lizard also didn't think someone would be able to locate it, so it had let its guard down.

Pan Tao took it by surprise in the same manner it had launched sneak attacks on Qin Shun and Zu Fang. Otherwise, if it had come out of the earth and fought Pan Tao openly, it wouldn't have suffered such a great loss.

After all, it was fundamentally stronger than Pan Tao.

Somewhat shamefaced, Pan Tao looked at Nie Tian from afar, only to find that Nie Tian had extended his arm high in the air and stuck out his thumb, making a gesture of praise towards him.

Pan Tao could find no traces of ridicule in Nie Tian's eyes, only heartfelt congratulations.

Nie Tian also understood that although locating the Lurker Lizard had been the key, they couldn't have wounded it without Pan Tao's decisive attacks. He himself had been too depleted to strike early on.

As a matter of fact, both he and Pan Tao had played important roles in this battle.

The Lurker Lizard had previously been hiding in the dark and unleashing murderous attacks on the trial takers. Now that it had fled the battlefield, the whole situation immediately turned

around.

Nie Tian had almost collapsed due to overconsumption of his power, but now that the Lurker Lizard had fled, he could finally catch a breath and regain his strength, knowing that the crisis had passed.

After seeing recognition in Nie Tian's eyes, a faint smile could be seen on Pan Tao's face, which was... one of heartfelt admiration and pleasure. "Hahaha."

He nodded at Nie Tian, and the both of them exchanged a look of tacit mutual understanding.

At that time, Zheng Rui reminded him in a loud voice. "Brother Tao! Don't just stand around. Come and help us get rid of this Frost Python!"

"I'm on it!" Pan Tao said, laughing.

However, just as he was about to rush towards them, his eyebrow twitched, and he noticed that Nie Tian was in a poor state.

Face serious, Pan Tao instructed. "Tong Hao! Don't bother with the spirit beasts any more. Go to Nie Tian's side and guard him for a while. He seems to be under the weather."

Tong Hao was the only one whose spirits didn't rise after the Lurker Lizard fled. He was still standing there looking stunned.



He knew very well that if Pan Tao hadn't jumped in to fight off the Lurker Lizard, he would have been its next victim, and he... would have surely been killed.

As of this moment, he was still seized by fear.

Upon Pan Tao's order, he glanced at Nie Tian, and found that Nie Tian was sitting on the ground with a pale face, and appeared to have lost all his spirit. He furrowed his brows and seemed to be somewhat unwilling to take action.

He wasn't aware that it was Nie Tian who had really saved him.

While everyone else was bathing in blood, Nie Tian, on the other hand, was sitting on the ground...

That made him feel that it was a bit unfair.

He thought Nie Tian did nothing to help.

"Tong Hao! Did you hear me?!" Pan Tao glared at him.

Only then did Tong Hao respond. "Yeah, got it. I'm on it."

From his point of view, it was Pan Tao who had saved his life, and he was in his debt.

Therefore, as long as Pan Tao instructed him to do something, he had to follow it, regardless of whether he was willing or not.

Soon, he arrived to Nie Tian's side.

“What's wrong? Are you okay?” he asked indifferently.

“It was nothing major, but I'm a little weak.” Nie Tian didn't explain, so as not to make Pan Tao, who had been incessantly praised by everyone, feel embarrassed. “Thank you for protecting me.”

“You're welcome. I'm just following big brother Pan Tao's orders.” With an unconcerned look on his face, Tong Hao sized up Nie Tian, before putting on an enigmatic expression, saying, “You're quite the talker. Moments ago, you told us to cast aside our fears, but now... look at you!”

Truth be told, Nie Tian's poor state and pale face did add up to the image that he was scared.

He took it for granted that Nie Tian had been scared to death, seeing no hope of surviving the fight with the Frost Python and the Lurker Lizard.

Nie Tian let it pass and didn't argue, since he didn't have the energy to waste on a person like him.

“As it turns out, you’re nothing but a talker,” Tong Hao murmured, looking at Nie Tian again with his eyes full of disdain.

All of a sudden, the other teenagers started to cheer.

“The Frost Python has also fled!”

“The rest of the spirit beasts are all retreating back into the depths of the glacier area!”

“Hahaha! We’ve won! We’ve fought them away!”

Nie Tian looked over with rapt attention, and only then did he realize that the Frost Python, at an amazing speed, had indeed fled to the deepest parts of the glacier area.

After losing assistance from the Lurker Lizard, it was forced to face An Ying, Zheng Rui, and Pan Tao together. Apparently it understood that once the three of them joined forces, it would be almost impossible to defeat them, and thus it left decisively.

The moment it left, the remaining spirit beasts certainly didn’t dare to linger around, and scattered in all directions.

“Do we chase them?” Zheng Rui asked, trying to conceal his excitement.

An Ying stood there holding her long saber, panting heavily,

beads of sweat rolling down her forehead. “No, we don’t. I’ve consumed too much of my spiritual energy dealing with the Frost Python. I don’t even have thirty percent of my spiritual power remaining in me. I have to recover as quickly as possible, and only then can we march further into the glacier area.

“Who knows if there are more second grade spirit beasts there.”

Pan Tao agreed. “Right. To be safe, we’d better recuperate for a bit.”

The trial takers, having just escaped death, wanted to chase the spirit beasts, but after hearing An Ying and Pan Tao’s comments, they all quickly gave in.

After this battle, every single one of them looked at Pan Tao differently.

In their eyes, it was Pan Tao who had severely wounded the Lurker Lizard that had been hiding in the dark. He had single-handedly made the greatest contribution to this battle!

Pan Tao was the one who had laid the groundwork for their victory.

Without him, the Lurker Lizard would be a huge threat to everyone, and Zheng Rui and An Ying wouldn’t have been able to force the Frost Python to flee.

Even though they didn't say it publicly, but after going through such a tribulation, everyone had come to view Pan Tao as a leader, just like An Ying.

They even began to muse that Pan Tao should be the one to give orders.

Pan Tao had earned respect and stateliness for himself with his performance in this battle.

# Chapter 44: Yuan Feng From The Grayvale Sect

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The battle was over.

The trial takers gathered around An Ying and her sect brothers, flattering Pan Tao and praising An Ying for undertaking the heavy responsibility of holding off the Frost Python.

It seemed the deaths of Qin Shun and Zu Fang hadn't affected their mood. After all, no one had been very close to them before entering the Green Illusion dimension together.

Seeing that the Lurker Lizard and the Frost Python had fled, Tong Hao, who had been guarding Nie Tian, left to join the crowd.

Nie Tian actually enjoyed being able to have some time to himself. He sat on the ground by himself, ignoring the clamoring crowd.

Instead, he narrowed his eyes, looking around as he pondered the unusual and strange occurrences that had occurred earlier.

“Psychic awareness traveling under the ground...”

Normally speaking, being in the sixth level of Qi Refining, his psychic awareness shouldn't be powerful enough to penetrate deep into the earth, not to mention search underground for a long time.

However, when he calmed himself earlier, and tried to sense the movements of the Lurker Lizard, his psychic awareness unexpectedly managed to leave his body.

As far as he knew, only Qi warriors who were much stronger than him would be able to do that.

Ever since he was young, he had been aware that he was special.

Because he had always been taller and stronger than his peers, none of them could defeat him by relying on physical strength alone.

But he had only been aware that he was physically stronger than his peers, not that his psychic power... was also superior.

With this battle, he had gained a better understanding of himself.

“It almost completely drained my energy for my psychic awareness to leave my body a single time. I should avoid using this skill as much as possible.”

As he was thinking to himself, an intense sleepiness struck him. He felt as if he needed to sleep for a very long time to fully restore the energy he had consumed.

Since there was no more threat from the spirit beasts, he let his

guard down, became relaxed, and gradually closed his eyes.

Not too far away....

Pan Tao was still being complimented by everyone, and from several dozens of meters away, he snuck a glance at Nie Tian.

When he noticed that Nie Tian had already started recuperating immediately after the battle, he came to have a higher opinion of him.

In his eyes, Nie Tian had already become one of the most important members of their team, his importance only second to An Ying's.

He even attached more importance to Nie Tian than Zheng Rui.

“Alright, alright.” Seeing that Nie Tian was already resting, he could no longer stand the noise of the people around him. “Let's all stop here and rest! Nobody knows whether the spirit beasts we've just scared off will return or not.”

“Everyone, rest and reorganize where you are. Get your strength back as quickly as possible!

“We have to make sure our battle prowess is always at a high level!”



An Ying nodded and instructed, “No talking until your spiritual power is recovered. You all talk a lot, but are unable to help when the situation is critical.”

She also took a glance at Nie Tian from afar.

Early on, when everyone was taken over by fear and didn’t know what to do, it was Nie Tian who had stepped up.

She had no idea of what happened to him after that, and why he looked so exhausted now, but Nie Tian’s calmness and wits at that crucial moment had left a deep impression on her.

Like Pan Tao, she also secretly deemed Nie Tian as an important team member, even though she said nothing.

Hearing Pan Tao’s and An Ying’s orders, the trial takers, who were still immersed in excitement, finally quietened down, and sat down in a circle with An Ying and Pan Tao in the center.

Each and every one of them reached into the cloth pouches that hung by their waists, and one after another, took out glittering, translucent spirit stones.

Eyes closed, they clenched their hands tightly onto the spirit stones and absorbed the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth from within them, thus quickly restoring the strength they had consumed.

Before entering the Green Illusion dimension, their clan's seniors had told them that the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth in the Green Illusion dimension was much poorer than that of the world they lived in.

Without help, restoring their strength would be an extremely slow process.

Therefore, every one of them was given spirit stones by their clan seniors before they entered the Green Illusion dimension so that they would be able to restore strength at a higher speed.

However, Nie Tian didn't take anything with him, due to the fact that the Nie clan was already in decline.

When everyone closed their eyes and started absorbing spiritual power from their respective spirit stones, Pan Tao left the crowd quietly.

He went to Nie Tian's side. Seeing Nie Tian sitting cross-legged with his eyes closed, he thought Nie Tian was sleeping, so after a moment of hesitation, he chose not to disturb him, but rather took out two pieces of jade-like spirit stones and placed them on the ground in front of him, before sitting himself not far from Nie Tian.

Even though An Ying's eyes were closed, she had been secretly paying attention to the sounds and movements around them, in case the spirit beasts returned.

She noticed Pan Tao's abnormal behavior and slightly opened her eyes, observing Pan Tao's every move, then whispering to herself, "How come this guy has changed so drastically?"

Even though she was confused, she didn't pursue the questions in her mind. Instead, she closed her eyes again and went back to recuperation.

Time passed quickly and soundlessly.

After an unknown period of time, while everyone was still recovering their spiritual power, they suddenly heard the sound of footsteps approaching.

One after another, they all opened their eyes nervously, thinking it must be the spirit beasts, returning to kill them.

"Don't worry, it's not the spirit beasts." Looking in the direction where the sounds had come from, An Ying said, "The sound of the footsteps doesn't belong to the spirit beasts, and it's not coming from the depths of the glacier area. If my speculations are correct, it should be a group of trial takers from the other sects."

An ice-cold voice suddenly rang out. "Good job, An Ying!"

In the next moment, Yuan Feng from the Grayvale sect showed up.

Soon after he appeared, Yun Song and the other trial takers from

the Grayvale sect also revealed themselves.

“The Grayvale sect!” Zheng Rui furrowed his brows and stood up.

“That’s correct.” Yuan Feng arrived in front of them. His cold eyes glanced up and down every one of them, before he stepped closer and took a look of the corpses of the spirit beasts as well as Qin Shun and Zu Fang who had died in battle. He then said, “From the look of it, you’ve just gone through a bloody battle. What is it? Did you run into the Frost Python?”

At this moment, Nie Tian was awakened from his deep sleep by Yuan Feng.

He knew that he couldn’t have slept for long.

However, even though it wasn’t a long sleep, he could clearly feel that he had recovered most of his strength.

Before he had time to look at Yuan Feng, he noticed the two spirit stones in front of him.

In the next moment, he saw Pan Tao, who was sitting the closest to him.

He immediately realized that the spirit stones were from Pan Tao, hence he thanked him, smiling.

“If you consider me as a worthy teammate, then keep those two spirit stones.” Pan Tao said with a sincere face.

Nie Tian nodded his head, picked up the spirit stones, and put them into his waist pouch.

The reason he felt exhausted wasn't that he had overly spent his spiritual power, but rather that he had drained his psychic power. Hence, he didn't need spirit stones to recover.

However, since Pan Tao had given them to him, he certainly wouldn't refuse.

The trial of the Green Illusion dimension was far from over. It was still hard to know whether or not they would encounter more dangerous situations.

Whenever he drained his spiritual power in the future, with the help of those two spirit stones, he would be able to recover in a much shorter time. That would also serve to increase his chances of winning.

Zheng Rui said, “Not only did we run into the Frost Python, but we also came across the Lurker Lizard! Dammit!... But fortunately, we're strong enough. Although we weren't able to kill the Frost Python and the Lurker Lizard, at least we forced them to retreat. If it were you guys, having to deal with the Frost Python and the Lurker Lizard at the same time, I'm afraid none of you would be able to survive.”

“Shut up!” An Ying called out to him.

“Hey!” Yun Song from the Yun clan chuckled as he said, “Cousin! They must have used up their spiritual power fighting off the Frost Python and the Lurker Lizard. Look, they’re all using spirit stones to recover their strength. This means they currently lack battle power.

“What’s more, two of them are dead!”

Yun Song’s eyes flashed with a strange light, before he finally cast his ill-intentioned gaze towards Nie Tian.

The moment he saw Nie Tian, his face turned cold, and his eyes filled with vicious intent.

It was only until now did Zheng Rui suddenly realize that his words had revealed the fact that their battle power was compromised.

He secretly hated himself for talking too much. Not daring to say another word, he cast a fierce glare at Yun Song.

“Yuan Feng, the purpose of our journey to the Green Illusion dimension is to kill the four second grade spirit beasts.” An Ying remained a sound mind. “The Frost Python must have consumed a lot of its energy fighting us. You can leave us, catch up to it, and kill it before it restores its full strength.”

“That can wait.” Yuan Feng’s tone was cold and indifferent as he lifted his hand, pointed at Nie Tian, and said, “This young man isn’t a member of the Spiritual Treasure sect. I need you to give him to me. If you do, I’ll leave, and hunt the Frost Python down in the deepest parts of the glacier area.”

“You want Nie Tian?” An Ying asked, stunned.

Pan Tao was also taken aback.

# Chapter 45: A Feud Begins

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An Ying was quite confused. “What did Nie Tian do to anger you? I don’t recall the two of you having a conflict. What do you need him for?”

“I don’t need to explain to you why,” Yuan Feng said, leaning forward aggressively. “Just give him to me, and we’re gone. We’ll go hunt down the Frost Python and kill it.”

After a pause, he snorted threateningly and said, “Otherwise, don’t blame me for taking advantage of your condition and attacking you guys before you have recovered!”

An Ying’s face turned grim. “What? You want to start a fight now?”

“That’s right,” Yuan Feng replied coldly.

An Ying furrowed her brows.

After the deaths of Qin Shun and Zu Fang, there were only 13 of them left, and they had just narrowly escaped a bloody battle.

An Ying herself had only recovered seventy percent of her spiritual power after recuperating for a while, and in her current condition, she wasn’t confident that she could defeat Yuan Feng.



The rest were in even poorer condition than she was. If it really came down to a fight, there was an eighty to ninety percent chance that they would lose.

Weighing the advantages against the disadvantages in her mind, she hesitated, looking over at the distant Nie Tian, and wondering whether he was worth her putting everyone in danger.

Zheng Rui, who had only remained silent for a moment, came to An Ying's side and said in a low voice, "An Ying, Nie Tian... isn't from the Spiritual Treasure sect. Is it really necessary that we go all out to save him? No killing is allowed in the Green Illusion dimension, so even if Yuan Feng were to capture Nie Tian, he would never dare to kill him. So why don't we...?"

Eyes glittering, not a single one of the other trial takers with the Spiritual Treasure sect said anything.

However, when Zheng Rui made the above statement, expressions of agreement appeared on their faces.

Apparently, they didn't think it was worth fighting the Grayvale sect for an outsider, especially when they had just experienced a bloody battle and had yet to recover.

If they were to fight the Grayvale sect now, they would definitely be on the losing side.

Among all of them, only Jiang Miao, who had been previously

saved by Nie Tian, appeared anxious and looked sympathetically at An Ying while shaking her head non-stop.

The other exception would be Pan Tao, whose face turned grim, as he was clearly trying to suppress his anger.

“Do you have a feud with Yuan Feng?” he whispered next to Nie Tian.

Nie Tian said calmly, “I have a feud with a woman from the Yun clan named Yuan Qiuying in Black Cloud City, and she is Yuan Feng’s aunt.”

Pan Tao nodded his head and suddenly stood up with the intention to back Nie Tian up. “So that’s how it is.”

At this very moment, Nie Tian also sprung to his feet, glaring violently at Yuan Feng. “What do you want?”

“Nothing much,” Yuan Feng said coldly. “Just to cripple you.”

Nie Tian took a deep breath, his eyes suddenly filled with ferociousness. “Bring it on then!”

He decided that if Yuan Feng dared to come over, he would immediately strike him with the style of furious punching that he had learned in the mysterious world.

Besides, after the short rest, he had regained most of his energy, and was confident that he could deliver the punch.

Although he knew that after that punch he wouldn't have any strength left to attack again, he still believed that with that one punch he would be able to kill Yuan Feng!

He had never shied away from fights, especially when others attempted to force him into a corner. He had never backed down one bit from a conflict.

Yuan Feng looked at him out of the corner of his eyes and arrogantly said, "Who the hell do you think you are? Do you have what it takes to fight me one-on-one? Only when you reach the ninth level of Qi Refining will I consider you as an opponent worth killing."

"So you don't dare?" Nie Tian said, intentionally provoking him.

Yuan Feng didn't even respond to Nie Tian. Instead, he looked at An Ying and impatiently said, "You're their leader. You aren't going to risk everyone's safety just for this reckless outsider, are you?"

Pan Tao suddenly said, "Yuan Feng! If you want to touch Nie Tian, you will have to go through me!"

Yuan Feng was stunned for a moment. "You?"

Nie Tian turned his head and looked deeply at Pan Tao, who was standing beside him, but didn't say a word.

However, Pan Tao's attitude obviously had an impact on An Ying.

Moments ago, An Ying was torn with indecision, but upon hearing his words, she immediately clenched her jaw, and strode over stand next to him.

Standing next to Nie Tian and Pan Tao, she pointed her long saber at Yuan Feng, and firmly declared, "You want to fight? Then let's fight! We aren't scared of you! If it's a war you want, we'll be happy to oblige!"

"What's happening?" Zheng Rui thought, deeply confused. However, since An Ying and Pan Tao had already stated their intentions, he could only support them, so slowly and reluctantly, he went over to their side.

Although none of the other trial takers wanted to get in another fight, after seeing that An Ying and Pan Tao had made up their minds, they all knew that they should support their leaders, so they also hurried over.

"An Ying, are you sure you've thought this through?" Yuan Feng said with a grim face.

"Yes, I have," An Ying replied loudly.

Yuan Feng questioned again, “You really think it’s worth it to let everyone bear the consequences for one outsider?”

“I don’t care which side he’s on outside of the Green Illusion dimension. Now that he’s here with us, it means he is one of us now!” An Ying brandished her long saber, and glanced at all of her teammates behind her. “If any of you gets bullied, I’ll do the same for you!”

Appealing loudly to the crowd, she cried out, “Fight to the last drop of our blood!”

Spurred by her statement, all the trial takers responded with even louder and fiercer shouts.

“Fight them!”

“Fight to the last drop of our blood!”

“Fight them to the end!”

Yuan Feng’s expression slightly flickered. When he carefully examined An Ying, Pan Tao, and the rest of the trial takers with the Spiritual Treasure sect, there was no longer even the slightest hesitation and fear in their eyes.

He didn’t realize that these people had just gone through a bloody

battle, and were still immersed in the fierceness of it.

The reason why they dared to accept the challenge wasn't Nie Tian, but rather the way Yuan Feng had talked to An Ying. Therefore, they wanted to fight for An Ying.

“Cousin...” Yun Song murmured in a low voice. He had caught sight of the thirst of blood in the eyes of An Ying and the others, and their willingness to fight to the death. All of that made him anxious, so he was the first to lose his nerve.

Yuan Feng's expression flickered as he weighed the pros against the cons in his head. Soon after, he nodded. Staring at Nie Tian, he said “You have a good leader. Lucky for you, I'm going to let it go this time, punk.”

With these words, he waved his hand, pointed at the deepest part of the glacier area, and said, “Let's go!”

With that, he took the lead and left.

The trial takers with the Grayvale sect secretly let out sighs of relief, and quickly caught up with him.

Soon, the ten trial takers with the Grayvale sect passed by An Ying's group, and disappeared into the glacier area.

Only by this point did An Ying and everyone loosen up their tightened nerves, and finally relax.

As soon as Yuan Feng was out of sight, they began making arrogant and rampant comments in loud voices, denouncing him for bluffing, and for lacking the courage to actually start a fight.

“That’s all they’ve got?! They’re pretty good at talking, but don’t have the courage to fight!”

“Yuan Feng is really full of hot air. Does he really think we’re scared of him?”

“That asshole! If we hadn’t just fought the Frost Python and the Lurker Lizard, I would be in the middle of killing them right now!”

“If I ever see him again, I’ll definitely teach him a lesson. That son of a bitch thinks a lot of himself.”

On the other hand, An Ying let out a deep breath. Sounding exhausted, she said, “Actually, that was close. That Yuan Feng... you don’t know him. He’s a maniac, and he’s capable of doing anything. Even I myself felt quite nervous. I was truly afraid that he might fight us at all costs.”

Pan Tao and Zheng Rui had a similar feeling.

Unlike the other trial takers, the three of them had long since heard about Yuan Feng’s deeds after he entered the Grayvale sect.

They all knew that Yuan Feng was a cruel and merciless figure. The reason he didn't actually fight them this time was most likely because he didn't wish to consume his group's power so early on. He also feared that the Cloudsoaring sect and the Mystic Mist sect might swoop in while they were fighting.

As the focus of this incident, Nie Tian expressed his gratitude to Pan Tao and An Ying, before he sat back down.

“Thank you,” he said.

After he sat down, he immediately closed his eyes, forcing himself to sleep.

He knew that as long as they were in the Green Illusion dimension, no one would be able to tell what they would face in the next moment.

The only thing he could do was to fully recover his strength as fast as possible, so that he could face the conflicts that could break out at any time.

“We’ve just saved you, and this is it?” Tong Hao said in a discontent tone.

Nie Tian didn't even twitch his eyelids.

“Aren't you supposed to thank everybody before you go and recover?” Tong Hao continued indignantly. “We almost risked our



lives fighting the Grayvale sect for you just now!”

Looking at Nie Tian, who had already closed his eyes and was falling asleep, the rest of the teenagers also had their faces filled with discontent.

Zheng Rui’s expression was especially cold and grim.

Pan Tao said angrily, “Tong Hao, shut your pie hole will you?!”

He was the only one who knew that Nie Tian was the real reason why Tong Hao was still breathing.

However, Tong Hao, completely unaware of what had truly happened, had taunted Nie Tian over and over again, which made Pao Tao so mad that he itched to punch Tong Hao in the face and smash his teeth into pieces.

“Oh, okay, I’ll just listen to you, Brother Tao.” Grievances spread across Tong Hao’s face

“All of you, stop wasting your time and start recovering,” An Ying said in a berating tone.

Only then did the crowd quiet down once again.

## Chapter 46: Is There More?

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With the help of the spirit stones, it took a while, but everyone eventually recovered, after which they rose to their feet.

Soon, cries of, “I’m starving!” began to rise up, and eventually, all eyes came to rest on the corpses of the spirit beasts.

With Pan Tao and Zheng Rui taking the lead, the group set up a bonfire. After cutting the meat off the bones, they made skewers with tree branches and then began to grill the meat above the fire.

Before long, the meat had been roasted into a deep brown color, and emanated an enticing aroma.

The hungry trial takers could no longer resist the temptation and started gulping down large chunks of spirit beast meat.

They sat around the bonfire, devouring the chunks of meat, fat dripping down their chins, and their faces filled with satisfaction.

“This is so delicious!”

“This is much fresher, more tender, and more delicious than the food back at home!”

“It’s not easy to have a meal of spirit beast meat. We’re blessed to have such a feast!”

At this moment, only An Ying and Nie Tian were still in deep, recuperative sleep, and thus could not enjoy the delicious food.

As Pan Tao ripped huge bites off of a greasy beast leg, he said, “We have more than enough dead spirit beasts. Roast some meat for An Ying and Nie Tian, so that they can wake up to a good meal.”

“Sure,” people responded.

Zheng Rui was cutting meat into small pieces with a knife, and eating in a graceful manner. “Brother Tao, what’s going on with you? Why are you looking after that punk all the time? Have you forgotten that we almost got into a fight with him?”

The rest of them were also confused about why Pan Tao had been looking after Nie Tian. Therefore, upon hearing Zheng Rui’s words, they all cast their glances towards the two.

“Things changed,” Pan Tao said with a upright expression. “When the Lurker Lizard sneaked up on Jiang Miao, he was the first one to notice it, and he saved Jiang Miao’s life. From that moment on, he had already truly become one of us.”

“No matter who he is outside of the Green Illusion dimension, in here, I want you all to treat him as our teammate.”

“It’s possible that we may come across even greater dangers in

the future. If we all have different thoughts and don't trust each other, I'm afraid we won't be able to get out of here alive." There was a sense of righteousness in his words.

At that moment, An Ying opened her eyes, took over, and said, "Pan Tao is right." Eyes full of admiration, she looked at Pan Tao, and then started to rebuke Zheng Rui, "You ought to learn from Pan Tao and stop focusing on the petty things. This journey to the Green Illusion dimension has opened my eyes to the fact that Pan Tao can be trusted with important missions. He has far exceeded my expectations."

Pan Tao gently lowered his head, looking a bit guilty as he said, "Don't say that. I just believe that the most important thing is for us to unite."

After being lectured, Zheng Rui grumbled to himself in irritation, "Wasn't it you who hinted for us to give Nie Tian a hard time in the Green Illusion dimension?"

Around this time, the baby-faced Jiang Miao noticed that Nie Tian had also opened his eyes. "He's awake."

"Go give him something to eat," ordered An Ying.

Then, she reached out her small, jade-like hands, snatched a huge piece of meat from Zheng Rui's hand, and shoved it into her mouth in an unconstrained manner. She bit out a chunk and started munching, while simultaneously mumbling, "Zheng Rui, why are you eating like a sissy? This is the Green Illusion dimension, not

the Spiritual Treasure sect. Do you really have to eat so gracefully and use a knife and a fork?”

Upon hearing An Ying’s comment, Zheng Rui immediately felt embarrassed, and gave up on his graceful usage of the short knife.

Meanwhile, Jiang Miao grabbed a piece of Frost Armor Rhino meat and walked over to Nie Tian’s side.

Jiang Miao handed it over to Nie Tian timidly. “This is for you.”

Nie Tian had just awoken and was still a little dizzy.

“Oh, thanks,” he said, grabbing the meat and immediately wolfing it down.

That piece of meat weighed at least 2.5 kilograms, but Nie Tian inhaled it down in the blink of an eye, not leaving a single scrap behind.

After witnessing this, Jiang Miao stood there aghast.

However, Nie Tian didn’t feel satiated in the least bit, and was still incomparably famished.

He looked at Jiang Miao. “Do we have more?”

Jiang Miao nodded and quickly replied, “Yeah! There’s still plenty left!”

With these words, she rushed to where An Ying and the others were sitting, and took an even bigger piece of meat, this one over four kilograms.

Nie Tian didn’t hold anything back. He grabbed the meat and wolfed it down as fast as lightning.

A warm current gradually began to build up in his abdomen. When Nie Tian focused his mind on it, his eyes suddenly shone with bright light.

Apparently that surge of warmth originated from the piece of meat that he had consumed, which came from a first grade spirit beast.

Unlike the meat he usually ate back in Black Cloud City, these spirit beasts had refined the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth and turned it into the nutrients for their robust beast bodies.

The meat clearly contained rich spiritual power.

Moreover, he was able to absorb the power and disperse it to his internal organs, thus strengthening his fleshly body.

He had never experienced anything like that before when he ate normal kinds of meat...

“Get me some more, please,” he said to Jiang Miao, his spirits high. “Bring over more this time. I’ve got a big appetite, and I can pack away more food than the five of those other kids combined. Look at me. We’re at the same age, but I’m taller and more robust than they are, aren’t I? That’s because I eat more than they do.”

“Your appetite is definitely astonishing,” Jiang Miao murmured, before she obediently returned to where An Ying was sitting to fetch more meat.

When Jiang Miao seized another sizable piece of meat that he had just cooked, Tong Hao looked at her, eyes wide, and couldn’t help but yell, “No way! You are giving him too much. Can he eat all that?”

Jiang Miao explained, “He already finished the pieces I gave him earlier.”

Upon hearing her words, everyone started to examine Nie Tian with a strange light in their eyes.

They hadn’t paid attention to Nie Tian before, and thus weren’t aware that he had already consumed enough meat servings to feed at least four people.

Their eyes widened as they watched Jiang Miao put 5 kilograms of roasted meat into Nie Tian’s hands.

Nie Tian, on the other hand, ignored their gazes, and rapidly tore the shockingly large piece of meat into shreds, gulping it down almost instantly.

“Does this guy know anything other than eating?” Zheng Rui said, sounding shocked.

An Ying and Pan Tao were also shocked by Nie Tian’s appetite, and their faces filled with disbelief.

Jiang Miao, somewhat intrigued, stared at Nie Tian, an expression of curiosity on her face. “So? Are you full? Do you want more?”

Nie Tian replied weakly, “How about... just a little more?”

Jiang Miao and An Ying exclaimed at the same time. “Ah?!”

The way the others looked at Nie Tian had also changed drastically, since now they thought of him as a monster in human shape.

“Is there more?” Nie Tian asked again in a low voice.

Under everyone’s scorching gaze, he began to feel slightly embarrassed, but he truly wasn’t full yet...

He didn’t know why, but after he had drained his psychic



awareness, he became surprisingly hungry, and his appetite grew significantly larger than before.

More shocking than that was that after he consumed all of the spirit beast meat, he could clearly feel more strands of power building up in his abdomen, before it gradually dispersed to his muscles, blood, bones, and internal organs.

Merely after eating vigorously for a while, he had a strange yet wonderful feeling that his body was growing stronger.

He didn't wish for that feeling to stop.

“Yes, there is!” It wasn't Jiang Miao who replied to him, since she was already flabbergasted by his appetite. It was Pan Tao.

Pan Tao, who had already ate his fill, strode towards him with a huge piece of meat in his hand, and under everyone's disbelieving gaze, he handed over to Nie Tian.

Nie Tian took it and started munching again. “Um, thanks.”

However this time, unlike before, he didn't wolf down the whole piece of meat that was as large as the previous one.

Halfway through with it, he finally slowed down his pace.

Yet, the piece of meat, which was horrifyingly large in everyone

else's eyes, eventually disappeared little by little into his mouth...

Nie Tian forced out a dry smile, and avoided looking at everyone's disbelieving face. "I'm pretty much full. And tired too. You guys do what you have to do, I'll get some more sleep."

Admiration stretched across Pan Tao's face. "What an amazing appetite!"

Face filled with shock, An Ying whispered to herself, "Does his amazing appetite count as the strange thing that big sister talked about?"

Eyes shut, Nie Tian held his breath, and with rapt attention, he started to gradually adjust his breathing. Having totally ignored the others' strange gazes, he began to thoroughly investigate the unusual experience he felt within himself.

It had become his habit that whenever he calmed down and meditated with rapt attention, he would always operate the Qi Refining Incantation to absorb the spiritual Qi around him.

"Yee?!"

The moment he started operating the Qi Refining Incantation, he discovered that the strands of warmth in his abdomen seemed to have been driven by the internal force that had been generated by the Qi Refining Incantation, converging wildly into his dantian's spiritual sea.

# Chapter 47: Days of Incomparable Satisfaction

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The Qi Refining Incantation was the most basic spiritual incantation.

Juniors from the Nie clan weren't the only one to practice cultivation with it; almost every child in the Qi Refining stage started out using it.

It was simple, easy to understand, and most commonly used to help children build a solid foundation.

The young cultivators from the Spiritual Treasure sect, the Cloudsoaring sect, the Grayvale sect, and the Mystic Mist sect all cultivated the Qi Refining Incantation before they entered the Lesser Heaven stage.

Normally speaking, such a simple and common incantation wasn't anything very miraculous.

However, when Nie Tian used it this time, he felt strands of warmth converging into the spiritual sea in his dantian.

After a sound sleep, he had already fully recovered his energy and power. When he examined himself with his psychic awareness, he could clearly feel that his spiritual sea... was expanding, slowly but surely!

When examining the spiritual sea with his psychic awareness, it seemed like a muddled cloud.

Inside the cloud, he could see pure spiritual power swirling about. Whenever he needed it, he could channel it out of the spiritual sea, through his meridians, to any part of his body. Thus, he could cast all kinds of spiritual techniques.

The spiritual sea was a fuel source for a Qi warrior. It was the fundamental reason why Qi warriors were powerful, and also the biggest difference between them and regular mortal beings.

At the Qi Refining stage, a Qi warrior's cultivation routine would be to continuously channel the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth into his spiritual sea, enabling the muddled, cloud-like spiritual sea to gradually expand.

The spiritual sea could be viewed as a vessel that stored spiritual power.

Naturally, the larger the spiritual sea, the more spiritual power it would be able to contain, and in turn, the more power a Qi warrior would be able to channel.

In general, the only way a Qi warrior would be able to upgrade that vessel would be to completely fill it up to capacity, and then force more spiritual power into it. Only then could it come to contain a greater amount than before.

Normally, when a Qi warrior absorbed the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth to expand and upgrade their spiritual sea, they wouldn't feel the actual change, not even in the slightest.

The amount of spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth that could be refined in one single session was extremely limited, and therefore, so was the expansion of the spiritual sea.

Under normal circumstances, one would be able to feel a slight increase in the capacity of his spiritual sea only after a month of exhausting practice.

The primary unit usually used to measure time in terms of cultivation practice was a year. For a Qi Refining cultivator, it would usually take at least one year to make a small breakthrough.

As for those who didn't work very hard, or had a poor talent, it would usually take them years to achieve such small breakthroughs.

Originally, Nie Tian would only be able to see the changes in his spiritual sea after a month of practice.

But now, just by channeling that surge of warmth into his spiritual sea, all of a sudden, he could sense that his cloud-shaped spiritual sea was extending outwards bit by bit.

His spiritual sea was obviously in the process of upgrade and expansion!

Moreover, to his surprise, he was able to clearly perceive the process.

That was something he had never experienced in his whole life.

“The spirit beast meat contained spiritual power! The spirit beasts must have absorbed the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth, refined it into pure spiritual energy, and dispersed it into their blood and muscles.”

“The power it contains is after refinement, therefore much purer and richer than the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth here!”

“The spirit beast meat is practically a godsend! Not only can it help me strength my physique, but it can also help me upgrade and expand my spiritual sea, boosting my cultivation to a great extent!”

After gaining a clear understanding of the process, he immediately started to channel the power he had absorbed from the spirit beasts' meat from his abdomen into his spiritual sea.

After an unknown period of time, when he could no longer feel new power being generated in his abdomen, he stopped his cultivation.

To his surprise, with that single session, he actually managed to expand his spiritual sea by ten percent!

He was currently in the sixth level of Qi Refining. Based on his normal cultivating speed in the Nie clan, he probably would've needed one and a half months to get such a result.

To break through into the seventh level of Qi Refining, he would need to expand his current spiritual sea to twice its original size, which would enable it to contain twice as much spiritual power as it could now.

If he had stayed in the Nie clan, even if he practiced cultivation day and night, he would still need a year and a half to enter the seventh level.

However, after doing nothing more than having a feast of spirit beast meat today, and then practicing cultivation for a single session, he managed to expand his spiritual sea by ten percent.

“Green Illusion dimension. I made the right decision by coming here!”

Before coming to the Green Illusion dimension, he didn't have a clear purpose, and merely considered this journey as another experience.

At first, he thought the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the Green Illusion dimension was faint, and he would have to fight different spirit beasts on a regular bases. Hence, the amount of spiritual power in his spiritual sea would be constantly at a low level.

Never would he have imagined that he could possibly improve his cultivation base in the Green Illusion dimension.

It wasn't until this moment, when he discovered that he could utilize the spirit beast meat to greatly improve his cultivation base, did he finally acquire a direction, and realize what a great boon the Green Illusion dimension's trial was to him.

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After recuperating and reorganizing, An Ying and her team set off to the depths of the glacier area, hoping to find and kill the Frost Python.

Unfortunately, it seemed that the Frost Python had hidden itself. After ten days of arduous searching, they still failed to track it down.

During that period of time, all they had come across were a few scattered first grade spirit beasts, each and every one of which they besieged and slaughtered.

Their fresh, tender, and delicious meat became food for the trial takers, shared by everyone.

Usually, a Frost Armor Rhino could weigh several hundred kilograms. However, after losing Qin Shun and Zu Fang, they only had thirteen people left.



The thirteen of them could consume about fifty kilograms worth of beast meat at the utmost.

They couldn't possibly carry fifty kilograms worth of meat while searching for the Frost Python.

Plus, every once in a while, they would run into new spirit beasts.

Because of all that, Nie Tian devoured more than enough beast meat every day with his frightening appetite.

Having realized the spirit beast meat could help him improve his cultivation, Nie Tian's already frightening appetite completely erupted.

Each day, he would eat spirit beast meat equivalent to the amount eaten by the other twelve put together!

What he had been doing in the recent days was to finish off the spirit beast meat that the others couldn't.

As for the meat he couldn't finish, he carried as much as he could, so that he would be able to come back to it when they couldn't find new spirit beasts to kill.

However, An Ying and the others showed no interest in carrying a large amount of spirit beast meat with them, because they probably could harvest more in the next battle.

Without a doubt, if they were to experience bad luck and couldn't find more spirit beasts in a day or two, they would still need food.

As a result, Nie Tian naturally became the one who carried the spirit beast meat for everyone.

It was also at this time that Nie Tian's shocking strength and ability to carry the heavy load became gradually known to everyone.

With several hundred kilograms of spirit beast meat on his back, Nie Tian didn't even break a sweat following the team, and more surprisingly, he could still run like a hare.

Without knowing the reason behind Nie Tian's behavior, everyone was quite content with his hardworking attitude, feeling that having someone like him to handle their supplies and carry several days worth of food for everyone... was actually not a bad thing.

When they felt hungry after failing to find a spirit beasts after a few days, even Tong Hao and the others, who had previously harbored resentment towards Nie Tian, changed their attitude towards him.

Every day, immersed in unprecedented joy, Nie Tian said to himself, "This is awesome!"

“This journey to the Green Illusion dimension is probably the best experience of my entire life!”

“Today, my spiritual sea has expanded by ten percent again, and that adds up to a ninety percent expansion since I first entered the Green Illusion dimension!

“Two more days! I just need two more days to break through into the seventh level of Qi Refining!”

He could feel himself improving on almost a daily basis!

Furthermore, carrying several hundreds kilograms of spirit beast meat itself was valuable training for his physical body.

He understood that it happened to be the best way to improve his physical strength to bear such a heavy load.

On one hand, he had been building up his physical strength by carrying a huge load. On the other, he had been upgrading his spiritual sea by eating the spirit beast meat. Over these days, he had truly been happy and satisfied.

He even wished to live like this forever.

The Frost Python, the Lurker Lizard, the Green Illusion dimension’ trial, the rewards, none of these mattered to him any more.

Because he had been able to see himself getting stronger by the second!

One day, An Ying and the others were resting around the bonfire, talking with eloquence, while Nie Tian was sitting ten meters away from them, operating the Qi Refining Incantation. All of a sudden, Nie Tian's body shuddered, and he violently opened his eyes that were filled with ecstasy.

“The seventh level of Qi Refining!”

## Chapter 48: Traces of the Ghost Sect

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Having searched in the glacier area for ten days, yet failing locate the Frost Python, An Ying finally started to grow anxious.

Apparently, the thirteen of them searching for the Frost Python together wasn't the smartest choice.

They had already killed almost of all the first grade spirit beasts in the glacier area. In the recent days, it had already become very difficult for them to encounter any low grade spirit beasts at all.

In order to improve their efficiency, An Ying made a bold decision: they would split up and search.

Like her, Pan Tao and Zheng Rui were from the Spiritual Treasure sect, and thus all had flare sticks in their hands.

If they released a signal, anyone within a five kilometer radius would be able to see it.

Therefore, after discussing the matter with Zheng Rui and Pan Tao, An Ying decided that each of them would led a team to conduct an inch-by-inch search for the Frost Python within a five kilometers radius.

Zheng Rui, the weakest of the three, picked four team members, while Pan Tao and An Ying chose three each.

Nie Tian, Jiang Miao, and a teenager named Guo Qi were in Pan Tao's team.

With Pan Tao in the lead, they picked a direction and parted ways with An Ying's and Zheng Rui's teams.

As usual, Nie Tian still carried a mountain of spirit beast meat on his back, and ate like a mad person every day while following Pan Tao.

Whenever there was time to rest, he'd immediately start using the Qi Refining Incantation to expand his spiritual sea.

In a period of about ten days, he had made a huge leap in his cultivation, from the sixth level of Qi Refining into the seventh. This had enabled him to enjoy the sweet taste of success.

To advance from the seventh level to the eighth level, he would need to again double the size of his current spiritual sea.

He had set a goal for himself, to enter the eighth level of Qi Refining within two months, with the help of spirit beast meat help.

By now, he had completely lost interest in searching for the Frost Python; all he cared about was his daily cultivation.

Pan Tao led them in thorough searches of each and every glacier and ice cave they saw. Finally he glanced at a time measuring

device, a disheartened expression on his face. “It’s been a day and a half,” he said. “We should be about 3.5 kilometers away from An Ying’s team now. I can’t believe we haven’t come across a single low grade spirit beast.”

“Brother Tao,” said Guo Qi, “perhaps there simply aren’t any spirit beasts left in this region.”

“I wonder how things are going with sister An Ying and brother Zheng Rui,” Jiang Miao said softly.

At this moment, the four of them sat at the foot of a small glacier. Failing to make any progress, they all seemed discouraged.

“I bet they haven’t come any closer to finding the hidden Frost Python than we have,” Pan Tao said. Sighing, he shook his head. “We’ve wasted way too much time in the glacier area. The Cloudsoaring sect and the Mystic Mist sect might have already killed the other two second grade spirit beasts already.”

“Brother Tao,” Guo Qi said, “Yuan Feng from the Grayvale sect entered the glacier area before us. We have already wandered around for more than ten days, but we haven’t run into any one of them. Isn’t it a bit strange?”

“What’s there to worry about?” Pan Tao shook his head. “The glacier area is actually a vast area. If Yuan Feng and his group have been searching for the Frost Python together just like we did, the odds of us running into them should be very small. Unless... they also split up and search in different regions. That’s the only way

we might even have a chance of running into each other.”

Guo Qi pondered for a while, and then nodded. “Good point.”

“Nie Tian, do you have any good ideas?” Pan Tao suddenly inquired.

Nie Tian, who had been eating meat silently beside Pan Tao, raised his head, mouth stained with grease. “If you can’t find it, how could I?” he answered in a lazy and unconcerned manner.

Ever since he realized that the spirit beast meat could greatly boost his cultivation, he had completely lost interest in searching for the Frost Python.

Pan Tao and the other two had all noticed Nie Tian’s lackadaisical attitude.

Among the three of them, Jiang Miao had been saved by Nie Tian, and Pan Tao knew Nie Tian had special talent, and thus they didn’t say anything.

Only Guo Qi had expressed his dissatisfaction towards Nie Tian multiple times, demanding that Pan Tao talk to Nie Tian, so that Nie Tian would not idle along like that, only caring about eating.

However, Pan Tao did nothing other than smile and ignore the requests.



Pan Tao pointed in a direction. “You two, search over there, and I’ll have a word with Nie Tian.”

Guo Qi’s eyes shone, thinking that Pan Tao must want to reprimand Nie Tian in private. He chuckled sinisterly, and pulled Jiang Miao away.

After they had left, Pan Tao came to Nie Tian’s side, forced out a smile and said, “Nie Tian, come on and help me.”

Nie Tian was stunned.

“Sure, I’m from the Spiritual Treasure sect, but my days in the sect aren’t as pleasant as you would think.” Pan Tao put on a sour face. “In the sect, people like me and Zheng Rui are actually not well received. No matter how hard we work, people will always say that we are who we are because of our parents or grandparents.

“Those old ones in the sect all admire people like An Ying, who made their way up from the subordinate clans, and were finally admitted into the sect.

“Truth be told, I’ve always been looked down upon and never been taken seriously.”

It took a moment for Nie Tian to respond, “Everyone has their own difficulties. You don’t want people to talk about you like that. But do you understand how hard it is for me to get admitted to

places like the Cloudsoaring sect and the Spiritual Treasure sect?”

“Yeah, I know.” Pan Tao nodded his head. “But your hard work and efforts will be acknowledged. But me? No matter how hard I work, my achievements will be only deemed as the result of the help that I’ve received from my parents and grandparents, rather than of my own efforts.

“This Green Illusion dimension’s trial is very important to me. I must make some accomplishment, so that they will have a whole new level of respect for me!”

“Alright,” Nie Tian said with a shrug. “How do you want me to help you?”

Pan Tao suddenly seemed thrilled. “You were able to locate the Lurker Lizard even when it was under the ground, so can’t you do the same thing again?!”

“From my point of view, the Frost Python must be hiding in a secret place that we are unable to see, just like the Lurker Lizard was.

“I don’t think that we can find it by solely relying on our eyes. I hope that you can apply the method you’ve used to locate the Lurker Lizard to search for that Frost Python.”

Nie Tian smile bitterly, but after a moment of hesitation, he said, “The glacier area is such a vast area. If we can’t roughly locate it,

it's going to be very hard for me to find it. Alright, since it's you, I'll give it a shot. But if it doesn't work, you can't blame me for it."

"Of course! Of course!" Pan Tao said in a hurry.

Soon after, Nie Tian calmed himself, adjusted his breathing, and started to unleash his psychic awareness.

With him as the center, strands of his psychic awareness extended out in every direction.

Those strands of psychic awareness were like invisible tentacles, traveling further and further away from him, covering a radius of forty meters.

Moments later, he opened his eyes, tired, and shook his head towards Pan Tao, saying, "It's not here."

"Let's change for another location then!" said Pan Tao.

"Let me... have a rest first." Nie Tian put on a wry smile.

"Okay! I'll wait for you!" Pan Tao completely listened to him.

In the following period of time, Nie Tian worked very hard with Pan Tao and the other two, probing the surrounding regions with his psychic awareness.

Every time he consumed his psychic awareness, he would feel incomparably exhausted, but after a deep sleep, he would be able to recover shortly.

Gradually, he discovered a pattern in that every time he drained his spiritual awareness, and recovered, his psychic awareness would be slightly enhanced.

At the very beginning, his sensing range could merely reach forty meters.

Later on, as his psychic awareness gradually strengthened, the range he could sense had already expanded to over fifty meters.

He was extremely reluctant to help Pan Tao locate the Frost Python at first, but after such discovery, he found the job worth doing.

He started to deem the bitter job of helping Pan Tao locate the Frost Python as a part of his cultivation: the cultivation of psychic power.

Guo Qi and Jiang Miao knew nothing about the agreement between Nie Tian and Pan Tao. Every time they arrived at a new location, Nie Tian would close his eyes and reopen them shortly after. Whenever Pan Tao saw Nie Tian shake his head after reopening his eyes, they would immediately give up that region and move onto a new one.

Both Guo Qi and Jiang Miao felt rather confused, not knowing what those two had been doing. They asked Pan Tao about it, yet he told them nothing other than that they had been thinking too much.

Soon, it came to the point that even Nie Tian and Pao Tao had gradually lost their faith and became increasingly less confident in finding the Frost Python.

One day, Nie Tian was once again probing around with his psychic awareness...

An extremely weak fluctuation of life suddenly reflected into his soul. He suddenly opened his eyes.

Pan Tao, who had been losing his confidence, had absolutely no anticipation when he looked at Nie Tian once again, but unlike the hundreds of times before this, Nie Tian didn't shake his head this time.

He asked, voice trembling, "What? Have you discovered something?!"

"It's not the Frost Python. It's something else." Nie Tian rose to his feet and pointed in one direction. "It's most likely... humans."

Apparently, Pan Tao seemed somewhat disappointed, but he still led the four of them and rushed to the position based on Nie Tian's guidance.

A strong smell of blood came from behind a grove of ice trees. When they passed through the ice trees, they caught sight of the bodies of two youngsters from the Grayvale sect, both of them lying in pools of blood.

One of them had a short sword stuck in his neck and appeared to have died long ago.

The other had countless interweaving cuts on his torso, which still oozed with fresh blood.

Furthermore, frothy blood spilled continuously out of his mouth. Clearly he had been bleeding excessively for some time, and was on the verge of dying.

Upon Pan Tao's arrival, the young man's glazed and lifeless eyes lit up for a second, before they completely lost their glow.

"He's dead." Pan Tao's face was grimmer than ever.

He approached the man, and looked down to examine him more closely. At first glance, he noticed that both of them had their thumbs chopped off.

Face aghast, Pan Tao suddenly lost his composure. Under the huge shock, his voice even became strange. "The Ghost sect! This is the Ghost sect's doing! Dammit, how did the Ghost sect's people get into the Green Illusion dimension?"

Nie Tian said with a puzzled expression, “What’s wrong?”

Pan Tao didn’t answer him. Instead, he carefully glanced around, and said in a cautiously low voice, “Go back the way we came, now!”

“Oh, okay.” Nie Tian was starting to get nervous. Quietly and carefully, they followed Pan Tao back to the road where they came from.

Pan Tao’s face had been grim the entire time, as he hurried his way without saying a word.

After walking anxiously for a long time, he believed they were safe, and thus lit up the flare stick.

The flare stick shot up a flare into the sky, which turned into a straight line of pitch-black smoke that retained its form for a very long time.

Half a day later, An Ying and Zheng Rui rushed towards him excitedly.

“Pan Tao! You’ve found the Frost Python?” An Ying couldn’t conceal her joy, and shouted out to him from afar.

When they got closer, Pan Tao shook his head, face ghastly. “We

didn't find the Frost Python, but we found traces of the Ghost sect!"

"Impossible!" Zheng Rui blurted. "That's totally impossible!!"

An Ying's face also turned pale. "Pan Tao! Are you kidding?! This is the Green Illusion dimension, a secret, private dimension that belongs to the Spiritual Treasure sect! Plus, we're in a trial. How could people from the Ghost sect possibly enter?"

"I'm dead serious!" Pan Tao barked back.

Upon hearing his words, both Zheng Rui and An Ying's faces filled with terror.



# Chapter 49: One More Casualty

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“The Ghost sect...”

Nie Tian quietly observed An Ying and Zheng Rui’s faces, his brow furrowed and his heart clouded with suspicions.

This was the first time that he had ever been out of Black Cloud City for so long.

All his life, he had practiced cultivation in the Nie clan in Black Cloud City, and most of the fascinating stories he had heard were about the Cloudsoaring sect.

To him, the Ghost sect was a new, unheard-of name.

He knew nothing about the Ghost sect, and didn’t understand why the three disciples of the Spiritual Treasure sect became so scared and anxious after learning that they had entered the Green Illusion dimension.

Just like him, most of the teenagers from the seven major cities also knew nothing of the Ghost sect, and puzzled expressions could be seen on their faces. Only two of them seemed to have heard about the Ghost sect from their respective clan elders.

As for those two, the moment they heard that Ghost sect disciples had also come to the Green Illusion dimension, their faces immediately turned pale, and their eyes filled with terror.

Apparently, the two of them were more scared of the Ghost sect than An Ying, Zheng Rui, and Pan Tao!

Pan Tao looked over at Nie Tian with a very serious look in his eyes. Taking a deep breath, he said, “Many of you have probably never heard of the Ghost sect, so I should probably give you a brief introduction. Our sect, together with the Cloudsoaring sect, the Grayvale sect, and the Mystic Mist sect, belong to the same Qi warriors’ alliance. The Ghost sect, the Blood sect, and the Hell sect, on the other hand, belong to the enemy alliance.

“The power of the Ghost sect, the Blood sect as well as the Hell sect isn’t inferior to ours, not even in the slightest.

“For several hundred years, our four sects have fought them countless times over the rights to mysterious dimensions and spiritual material mines, both overtly and covertly.

“Over such a long time, we have never truly defeated them. Both sides are pretty much equally strong.”

After pausing to let the information sink in, Pan Tao continued, “Although our sects secretly fight with each other from time to time, those fights are under control. Normally, there won’t be mass casualties. However, every time our sects go to war with them, there are always tremendous casualties! Not only low stage disciples like us, even powerful sect elders from the four sects may be killed in those battles!

“The two sides are now as incompatible as fire and water. Upon encountering each other, both sides will fight to the last man!

“Since people from the Ghost sect have shown up in the Green Illusion dimension, I guess their goal is to kill us all!

“Only when we’re killed off will they retreat from the Green Illusion dimension!”

Upon hearing these words, every trial taker, including Nie Tian, became silent.

Everyone’s face grew grimmer than ever. Due to the appearance of the Ghost sect disciples, the Green Illusion dimension seemed to have suddenly turned into a bloody battlefield.

Jiang Miao suggested in a timid voice, “Elder sister An Ying, how about... we return to the Secret Dimension Gate and inform your elder sister that people from the Ghost sect have entered the Green Illusion dimension?”

All the teenagers were trembling with fear upon the news of the Ghost sect’s arrival, and hurried to nod in agreement with Jiang Miao’s proposal.

“It won’t work for us go back.” An Ying shook her head, and killed their hope with one sentence. “After everyone entered, the Secret Dimension Gate was temporarily sealed, to prevent people from cheating by sneaking into the Green Illusion dimension to

provide assistance.

“Only when the trial is over and the allotted half year is up will the Secret Dimension Gate be reopened.

“In the meantime, we’re completely sealed off from the outside world. We can’t get out, and they can’t get in.

“Whatever happens in the Green Illusion dimension, we’ll have to survive these six months.”

“Then, we’re screwed, aren’t we?” Guo Qi said in desperation. “No one knows how many of them came here and what cultivation stage they’re at. If they’re all Lesser Heaven and Heaven stage experts, they can definitely kill us all in half a year. If that’s the case, none of us will be able to get out of here alive. Instead, we’ll all be tortured and murdered by those people from the Ghost sect.”

Although An Ying secretly despised his cowardliness, she had to comfort the crowd. “You’re worrying too much. People from the Ghost sect, the Blood sect and the Hell sect are blood-thirsty, brutal, and merciless, but they’re also extremely arrogant. They know that the trial takers our sects send to the Green Illusion dimension are in the Qi Refining stage.

“Since they always have a high opinion of themselves, those they’ve sent to the Green Illusion dimension should also be juniors, probably in the same stage as us.

“Perhaps they have more battle experience than we do, and have been baptized by blood. However, as for strength... we should be equally strong.

“As long as we are not outnumbered, we might not necessarily end up being killed!”

Guo Qi was stunned. “Do you mean that the guys the Ghost sect has sent here are also in the Qi Refining stage?”

An Ying nodded. “I believe so.”

Guo Qi heaved a sigh of relief, and even built up a bit of courage. Snorting, he said, “If we’re in the same cultivation stage, why do we fear them? Elder Sister An Ying, I saw your expression just now, and figured powerful experts of the Lesser Heaven and Heaven stage had come for us. Hahaha, it’s the three of you that have frightened us.” He pretended to be worry-free.

Hearing Guo Qi’s comments, everyone else seemed to loosen up.

Even Nie Tian, who had initially been nervous, soon calmed down and thought to himself, “If they are all in the Qi Refining stage, then those from the Ghost sect may not be so deadly.”

Only An Ying, Pan Tao, and Zheng Rui didn’t relax in the slightest. They exchanged a glance, and understood the bitterness in each other’s eyes.

They were the only ones who truly understood how terrifying the Ghost sect, the Blood sect, and the Hell sect actually were.

Killing and bloodbath had accompanied the growth of every disciple of those three sects. They all viewed slaughtering people as common as everyday affairs like eating and sleeping.

Even though An Ying, Zheng Rui, and Pan Tao had been cultivating in the Spiritual Treasure sect, they were far from adequate in the aspect of real combat, and only could make it up with their powerful spiritual tools.

As for those from the subordinate clans, like Guo Qi, once they engaged in battle with the Ghost sect's disciples, they would most likely be scared so badly by their enemies' bloody and ruthless means that they would have a mental breakdown.

These trial takers had grown up like flowers in the greenhouse. Not one of them had ever passed through the storm of real combat.

The reason the four sects organized the Green Illusion dimension's trial was to hammer them like steel, to ready them for possible bloody battles in the future.

Who would have guessed that before the Green Illusion dimension trial even ended, they would have to face the blood-thirsty disciples from the Ghost sect.

This was indeed overly cruel for them.

An Ying didn't go on and tell the others more about the dreadfulness of the Ghost sect, for fear of frightening everyone else so much they would lose the will to battle.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

It was at this very moment that the sounds of footsteps suddenly rang out in distance, and drew nearer and nearer.

Suddenly, An Ying's expression flickered. She patted her head and regretfully said, "Damn! I forgot to leave this place first!" She looked up into the sky.

Nie Tian looked up and saw the black smoke in the sky, which still hadn't dissipated, and immediately understood.

The signal Pan Tao had released was a line of black smoke that shot up into the clouds. Since An Ying and Zheng Rui had seen it, so could others.

In a five kilometers radius, whoever looked up at the sky would be able to see the thick, lingering smoke.

After An Ying and Zheng Rui's teams had assembled with Pan Tao's team, they only focused on talking about how frightening the Ghost sect was, and completely forgot to leave that location as soon as possible. This was a huge mistake!

“People from the Spiritual Treasure sect! It’s you!”

A gray-garbed, blood-soaked teenager, ran towards them in a panic, a thin, broken sword held in his hand. From the way he dressed, he was clearly from the Grayvale sect.

He had fear and bitterness written all over his face. The moment he saw An Ying and her group, he seemed to have found his savior, and immediately cried out with ecstasy.

“Help me! We were attacked by the Ghost sect. Two of my teammates are dead, and I’m the only survivor!” As he ran madly towards them, he kept looking behind him from time to time, as if the people from the Ghost sect were just behind him.

“How many Ghost sect disciples are after you?” An Ying shouted.

“Three! They were right behind me. You guys be careful. They’re coming!”

The gray-garbed teenager staggered by An Ying, Zheng Rui, and Pan Tao, who had been in the forefront, and rapidly made his way to the center of group where Nie Tian and the others had been.

By this point, everyone had been shocked by his words, gazing nervously into the direction which he had come from.

It seemed as if three disciples from the Ghost sect would dash out from that direction, and head their way in the next moment.



Suddenly, Nie Tian shouted, “Something is wrong!”

Without the slightest hesitation, he attacked the teenager from the Grayvale sect, condensing a large amount of spiritual power into his fist and unleashing a punch.

BOOM!

The teenager was instantly forced to back away. At the same time, the fear and anxiety vanished from his eyes, and was replaced by a look of deceit.

“Nie Tian! What are you doing?!” Guo Qi, who had been standing right next to that teenager, suddenly changed his attitude, and glared at Nie Tian. “I know that you harbor hatred towards Yuan Feng, but now that people from the Ghost sect have showed up, you’d better put aside your hatred! He has already been badly injured. Do you want to take the opportunity and kill him now? Do you have no shame?”

“What the hell do you know?!” Nie Tian replied furiously. Once again, he threw himself towards the teenager from the Grayvale sect. “Guo Qi! You almost got fucking killed!”

“You’re the one who’s gonna get killed!” Guo Qi said angrily.

At that very moment, the teenager from the Grayvale sect dodged Nie Tian’s attack, shifted to another person’s side, and suddenly

thrust the broken sword in his hands forward.

That other person was completely confused and unguarded, looking at the teenager from the Grayvale sect and not doing anything in response.

When he finally realized the danger, the teenager from the Grayvale sect had already pierced through his chest with the broken sword.

“Hahaha!”

The Grayvale sect teenager’s face twisted with a ferocious smile. With a brief glance at Nie Tian, he bolted away like lightning.

It was not until this moment that everyone realized what had happened, and started to shriek.

“Huang Ye is dead!”

“He killed Huang Ye!”

An Ying, Pan Tao, and Zheng Rui had focused all their attention in the direction that the Grayvale sect teenager had come from, waiting for the three Ghost sect disciples to appear, expressions serious.

When they heard the quarrel between Guo Qi and Nie Tian, and

turned around to see what had happened, it was already too late.

Huang Ye had already been killed!

“He’s a disciple of the Ghost sect!” Pan Tao finally awoke to the fact.

“Haha!” That teenager taunted arrogantly while running away like a flash. “A bunch of naive dumbasses! Don’t imagine any of you can walk out of the Green Illusion dimension alive! You’ll see. We’ll slaughter every one of you! Next time you see me, I won’t be alone!”

SHEW!

Like a gray flash, he shifted his position among a grove of ice trees, until he disappeared into the distance.

“I, I...”

Guo Qi had been terrified and soaked in sweat. He looked at Nie Tian’s ice-cold face, not knowing what to say.

However, he knew in his heart that he had been standing right next to that teenager, and if it weren’t for Nie Tian, that teenager would have laid his murderous hand on him first.

It was exactly like Nie Tian had said, moments ago he... almost

died.

Nie Tian said, face cold, “It was precisely because of the hatred between Yuan Feng and me that I memorized every one of his men’s faces when they were demanding you to hand me over! I engraved every single one of their faces in my head and prepared to settle with them later! That person was clearly not one of them!”

Guo Qi bowed his head down. “Sorry, I, I was wrong.”

# Chapter 50: Another Layer of Shadow

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Now that it was clear what had happened, the outraged Tong Hao sped off in the direction in which the Ghost sect disciple had fled.

“Dammit! There’s only one of him, yet he dared to act so brazenly! Let’s chase him down and kill him to avenge Huang Ye!”

It seemed the two trial takers standing next to him had been close with Huang Ye. Filled with grief, they followed along after Tong Hao.

“Don’t chase him!” An Ying cried. “Get back here, all of you!”

Tong Hao turned around, and for the first time, talked back to An Ying. “Why? Huang Ye was just cut down right in front of us. Are we really going to sit back and do nothing?!”

“You won’t be able to catch up,” Pan Tao interjected. “The Ghost sect disciples are experts in escaping and hiding. They can travel like ghosts. Even if An Ying and I were to chase after him, we wouldn’t be able catch him, let alone you guys.”

Frustrated, An Ying said “First things first. Let’s give Huang Ye a proper burial.”

Only by disguising himself with the robes of the Grayvale sect did the Ghost sect disciple successfully deceive them all.

If it weren't for Nie Tian, who had memorized the faces of everyone from the Grayvale sect, and thus immediately attacked the murderous imposter, two people would have been killed instead of just one.

As the leader, An Ying's failure to notice something peculiar about the situation directly led to Huang Ye's death, hence she blamed herself.

"Listen to her," Pan Tao urged Tong Hao and the other two. "Focus on burying Huang Ye, not on rushing off carelessly. You don't know the Ghost sect well enough. If you were to chase after him and get separated from us, I fear that..."

Apparently, he didn't want Tong Hao and the other two to follow Huang Ye into death.

Nie Tian, face grim but calm, looked off in the direction the Ghost sect disciple had appeared from. "The people from the Grayvale sect were probably killed over there," he said, "where that young man came from."

"I suppose so," replied Pan Tao. "He was wearing the Grayvale sect's robes."

"How about we go take a look?" Nie Tian proposed.

Pan Tao's expression flickered, and then he nodded. Looking at An Ying, he said, "Nie Tian and I will go take a look. Whatever we

find, we'll head back soon. There probably aren't any more disciples from the Ghost sect in the vicinity. Otherwise, he wouldn't have attacked us alone."

An Ying pondered the situation for a moment before saying, "Alright. But be careful!"

"Okay, we won't go too far," Pan Tao promised.

After that, both of them left the group and headed in the direction that the Ghost sect disciple had come from.

Immediately after they left, Jiang Miao said, "Nie Tian... is actually quite nice. At first we all thought he didn't care about anything but eating, but he managed to detect the smallest anomalies when the crucial moment arrived. Without him, we probably would have been killed back when we encountered the Lurker Lizard."

Then she looked over at Guo Qi. "And he just saved Guo Qi's life."

Guo Qi bowed his head in embarrassment and said, "It was my bad. I wronged him."

"Nie Tian..." An Ying muttered and nodded. "His perception is indeed better than all of ours. This is undeniable. If it weren't for his warning, that Ghost sect disciple could have killed one or two more of us."

“It seems it was the right decision to not give him to the Grayvale sect,” said Jiang Miao. “He has truly helped us.”

The rest of them all had a shameful look on their faces. It appeared only then did they have a fair opinion of Nie Tian.

Even as they discussed Nie Tian, he was carefully searching the area where the Ghost sect disciple had come from.

Because the Ghost sect disciple deliberately created the false impression that he had been blood-soaked from a fierce battle, his wild charge toward An Ying’s group left a lot of fresh blood on the ground.

By tracking that blood, Nie Tian and Pan Tao effortlessly found the place where the battle had taken place.

The battlefield was in a snowy valley, about five hundred meters away from the location of the rest of the group. Within that valley lay two trial takers from the Grayvale sect, who had clearly died tragic deaths.

One of them was a young woman around fourteen or fifteen years old, who was completely naked.

As soon as Pan Tao laid eyes on the scene, his face turned very grim and cold. “She must have been raped by that Ghost sect disciple before she was killed.”



A dour gleam could be seen in Nie Tian's eyes as he averted his gaze. "These guys from the Ghost sect all deserve to die!"

"Their thumbs have also been chopped off. It's clearly the Ghost sect people's doing." Pan Tao sighed and went forward, digging out a pit in the ice and burying the two corpses.

After finishing the job silently, Pan Tao frowned and said, "There were a total of ten people from the Grayvale sect who entered the Green Illusion dimension, but according to what we've seen, four of them have already died. There may even be more casualties, people we haven't come across yet. The Grayvale sect has suffered some serious losses. I wonder if Yuan Feng is dead or not."

After a momentary hesitation, Nie Tian said, "One Ghost sect disciple showed up in the glacier area, and that means the rest of them are also here. In my opinion, we need to join forces with people from the Mystic Mist sect and the Cloudsoaring sect, and deal with the Ghost sect disciples together. We have no idea how many of them are wandering in the glacier area."

Pan Tao also agreed to his suggestion. "You're right. Now that the Ghost sect has appeared, the mission of killing the second grade spirit beasts is no longer a priority. Let's go back, tell An Ying what we've found, and get out of the glacier area as soon as possible. Along the way, we can think of a way to join forces with people from the Mystic Mist sect and the Cloudsoaring sect."

"That would be the best choice."

Having reached an agreement, the two of them went back the way they had come, and soon got back to where An Ying and the rest were.

“Any findings?” Zheng Rui asked urgently.

“We’ve found two more dead bodies in a snowy valley. ” Pan Tao said to An Ying with a grim face, “Those two suffered even more miserable deaths, and I’ll spare you the details. Nie Tian and I have talked. We agree that it isn’t safe to remain in the glacier area, considering we don’t know how many of them are here.”

An Ying nodded her head. “You want to join forces with people from the Mystic Mist sect and the Cloudsoaring sect, right? We had a discussion while you two were gone, and we’ve made the same decision.”

“Everybody, prepare yourselves. We’re going to pass through the glacier area and proceed to the desert, where the Lurker Lizard should be.”

“The Mystic Mist sect and Cloudsoaring sect disciples probably have no idea that the Lurker Lizard showed up in the glacier region, and would have gone to the desert to kill it. That’s where we’ll find them.”

Everyone instantly chimed in with her. “Alright!”

The deaths of Huang Ye and the other four trial takers from the

Grayvale sect had made them harbor great fear towards the Ghost sect disciples.

None of them knew how many of them were in the area, but they knew that if they were unlucky enough to run into a large group of them, they could all be slaughtered.

The wisest decision of all was definitely to join forces with the other three sects, and fight the Ghost sect together.

“Let’s move.” An Ying ordered, her disposition somewhat downcast.

From that point on, the group didn’t dare to split up. Sticking closely together, they walked in the direction that An Ying had pointed out, which headed directly towards the desert.

Walking in the lead position of the group, Zheng Rui was the first to locate the corpse of a young woman, who had been impaled to an ice tree with a long spear. “There’s another dead body over there! It’s another Grayvale sect disciple!”

She was also stripped of all clothes, and the fact that she was frozen and covered in a thin layer of ice indicated that she must have died some time ago.

Shockingly, dried up blood could be seen around her pubic region.

Her eyes were wide open, her face full of fear and desperation; anyone would be able to tell at a glance what had happened to her before she died.

“Goddamn Ghost sect!” Jiang Miao cursed with a trembling voice. “They should all die! Die a thousand times!”

The other girls in the group also looked at the ice-cold body, shivering from either anger or fear.

“Bury her properly,” An Ying said with a grim face and gritted teeth, “then we march on. We can’t stay here for long, but I assure you, we’ll be back! When we do, we’ll avenge her and slaughter all the Ghost sect disciples!”

Pan Tao remained silent while he buried the girl.

After that, they continued marching towards the desert, with no one in the mood to talk anymore.

Nie Tian could feel their deep-rooted hatred towards the Ghost sect, and knew that they would sooner or later vent it all out by offering the blood of those Ghost sect disciples to memorialize those who had died tragically .

After an unknown period of time, they finally passed through the glacier area and entered the scorching hot desert.

The two areas were both part of the Green Illusion dimension,

and not far from each other. However, they were as different as heaven and earth.

The moment the trial takers arrived in the desert, they started to trickle with sweat. It felt like the sandy ground under their feet was baking them.

They only traveled for a short while before Pan Tao yelled, “There’s a dead body over there!”

Nie Tian ran forward and saw a young man in the robes of the Cloudsoaring sect lying on a sand dune, completely dried up.

There didn’t seem to be even a single drop of blood left inside his body. He was completely drained, like a desiccated corpse.

“This... this is...!” After bending over to examine the body, Pan Tao turned back violently, looking An Ying in the eye. “The Blood sect! This is the work of the Blood sect!”

# Chapter 51: Signal for Help

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“I can’t believe the Blood sect also sent people into the Green Illusion dimension.” An Ying looked down at the dried up corpse. “I seems the Ghost sect, the Blood sect, and the Hell sect all have their eyes on us. I just don’t know if the Hell sect... has also sent forces here. If so, I’m afraid the odds are going to be even more stacked against us.”

The appearance of the Blood sect’s disciples had sapped An Ying’s last remaining confidence regarding the journey into the Green Illusion dimension.

“What should we do?” Zheng Rui said, clearly worried. “How about we find a remote corner of the dimension and hide there for six months? If we haven’t emerged by then, our sect elders will surely come and check on us. We’ll be safe then.”

The rest of the trial takers, on the other hand, didn’t say a word.

Before coming to the desert, they focused on the idea of joining forces with the other three sects, returning to the glacier area, and killing every Ghost sect disciple.

However, the first thing they saw when they stepped into the desert was evidence that disciples of the Cloudsoaring sect were being slaughtered by the Blood sect.

It was human nature to fear death. Seeing the Cloudsoaring sect disciples, who they had originally thought to rely on for help, now

in a difficult situation themselves, An Ying and her group were visibly shaken.

An Ying fell into silence as she pondered Zheng Rui's suggestions.

All of a sudden, Pan Tao pointed to the distant sky, deeper into the desert. "There!"

Eyes squinting, Nie Tian discovered a line of dark-red smoke reaching into the clouds, like a dragon charging into the heavens.

"That's the Cloudsoaring sect's signal for help!" An Ying exclaimed.

Pan Tao thought for a moment, and said, "The Cloudsoaring sect's people must have gotten into trouble, and are most likely battling with the Blood sect! Jiang Lingzhu's strength is extraordinary. If it were the Lurker Lizard alone, she shouldn't have given out the signal for help. Moreover, I wounded the Lurker Lizard in the glacier area. It couldn't have completely recovered in such a short time."

Various expressions flashed across Zheng Rui's face. "It's possible that the Cloudsoaring sect is being slaughtered by the Blood sect. When we get there they... may already be dead. If they're facing the Blood sect and the Hell sect together, they'll be killed off even faster. Once we get there, we might have to deal with the Blood sect and the Hell sect at the same time. What do you guys think?"

“You... you guys call it,” Guo Qi said weakly.

In his eyes, Nie Tian saw fear and cowardice, and couldn't be more clear about what Guo Qi was thinking.

“I think...” said Nie Tian.

Surprisingly, the moment he spoke, everyone's eyes became fixed on him.

“What do you say?” said Pan Tao.

“Since we know the people from the Ghost sect and the Blood sect are here in the Green Illusion dimension, we should consider us and the other three sects as a single group. We live and die together. The more disciples from the other three sects are killed, the worse odds we get. It's totally imaginable that once the other three sects die out, the Ghost sect and the Blood sect will exert all means to find and kill us.

“The earlier they die, the more time the Ghost sect and the Blood sect will have to search for us.

“And when they find us, we will have to single-handedly fight the Ghost sect and the Blood sect. There will be no one to help us.”

With these words, Nie Tian threw a deep look at An Ying, and said gravely, “If you don't have the confidence to keep the Ghost sect and the Blood sect from finding us in the Green Illusion



dimension, we should get to where the Cloudsoaring sect has sent out the signal as soon as possible.”

“I, I...” An Ying stammered. After a moment of hesitation, she said somewhat disheartedly, “The Green Illusion dimension isn’t as big as you’d think. And the Blood sect is famous for their expertise in tracking people through the use of blood. I don’t think we can escape from their search just by hiding.”

Upon hearing her words, Guo Qi and the others’ faces suddenly turned pale from the unexpected blow.

“If that’s the case, then what are we waiting for?” Nie Tian countered.

Staring firmly ahead, An Ying finally made up her mind, and called out, “You’re right. Let’s head over there now and see what exactly they’ve run into!”

**SHEW!**

The second she finished talking, Nie Tian shot forward like a sharp arrow that had been released from its string.

This time, he didn’t try to hold anything back. Spiritual power exploded inside of him, and with his sturdy physique, Nie Tian rapidly whizzed forward at a speed that made even An Ying feel amazed.

He knew Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian were traveling with the Cloudsoaring sect's group.

Jiang Lingzhu was the beloved daughter of the Cloudsoaring sect's master, Jiang Lingzhu. He had only met her once in Black Cloud City, but she left him a good impression.

Nie Xian, on the other hand, was one of the few clansmen that Nie Tian thought highly of.

Even if it were only for Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian, Nie Tian wouldn't sit back and watch the Cloudsoaring sect's people getting slaughtered.

Not to mention that he knew better than anyone that the more trial takers of the Cloudsoaring sect they could save, the better odds of survival they would have fighting the Ghost sect and the Blood sect in the Green Illusion dimension.

He was always able to make a rational analysis of the situation in crucial moments, and thus understand how to save himself.

He knew very well that helping the Cloudsoaring sect meant helping themselves!

In the middle of the desert, by a lake...

Six trial takers from the Cloudsoaring sect, including Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian, were engaged in fierce fighting against Yu

Tong and other four disciples of the Blood sect. Numerous streams of blood-colored light were passing quickly over the battlefield.

Off to the side, two trial takers from the Cloudsoaring sect were lying in pools of blood, dead.

Closer to the lake, there lay a few badly mutilated spirit beast corpses, and shockingly, the Lurker Lizard was among them.

Not long ago, Jiang Lingzhu and her group had found the Lurker Lizard in this area, and after a hard-fought battle, they eventually slaughtered it.

Just when they were about to sever the Lurker Lizard's head, five Blood sect disciples suddenly showed up, with Yu Tong as their leader.

It seemed that the Blood sect disciples had been waiting in the dark for their battle with the Lurker Lizard to end.

One side had exhausted all their strength while the other side was full of vigor. The battle had been skewed from the start.

After a short fifteen minutes of fighting, two of the Cloudsoaring sect disciples had died by the hands of the Blood sect disciples.

With merely six people left, the Cloudsoaring sect were at an absolute disadvantage facing the five Blood sect disciples. Therefore, they had to release the signal for help, hoping people

from the other three sects were in the vicinity and could rush over upon seeing the signal.

WHOOKSH! WHOOKSH! WHOOKSH!

Countless blood snakes, as thick as a thumb and five to six meters long, slithered along by Yu Tong's side, making sounds that sounded like the cracks of a whip.

They emanated the pungent odor of blood, within which pulsed a strange power that could make people lose control of their own blood.

During her fight with Yu Tong, Jiang Lingzhu was forced to spare some attention to suppress the strange movement of her blood. She was in a terrible situation.

WHOOKSH!

A long blood snake suddenly emerged from the sand behind Jiang Lingzhu, viciously lashing Jiang Lingzhu on the back with its tail.

Sensing the burning pain, Jiang Lingzhu let out a muffled groan, and staggered several steps forward.

WHOOKSH! WHOOKSH!

Under Yu Tong's control, even more blood snakes targeted Jiang Lingzhu and shot toward her with the intention of ripping her into shreds.

“Cloud Illusion Shield!”

Numerous cloud clusters suddenly emerged from the silver shield that Jiang Lingzhu held in her hand, which turned into a shield of clouds that completely enveloped her.

WHOOKSH! WHOOKSH! WHOOKSH!

One whipping sound after another rang out, as the blood snakes lashed their tails onto the thick layer of clouds.

Jiang Lingzhu's face suddenly turned pale, apparently from having consumed a large amount of spiritual power. Rage filling her heart, she said, “Despicable! If I hadn't lost some of my spiritual power because of killing the Lurker Lizard, you wouldn't be able to hit me even once!”

“Whatever,” Yu Tong said indifferently, continuing with her deadly attack.

WHOOKSH!

In this very moment, a figure suddenly appeared from behind a sand dune.

“Nie Tian!” exclaimed Nie Xian, even as he staggered backward because of the attack of a Blood Sect disciple. By this point, he had almost been pushed into the lake itself.

“Nie Tian!” Jiang Lingzhu cried out in joy. Enlivened, she asked, “Where’s An Ying? Are they behind you?”

“Yes, they’ll be here shortly,” Nie Tian shouted.

Upon hearing the news that the forces from the Spiritual Treasure sect would arrive soon, the desperate Cloudsoaring sect disciples suddenly seethed with excitement.

“Everyone, hang on for a little longer!”

# Chapter 52: The Might of One Punch!

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Upon arrival, Nie Tian didn't immediately join the battle, but rather observed the situation for a moment.

He almost immediately noticed Yu Tong.

From her looks, she was fifteen or sixteen years old. Well dressed and with a curvy body, she had blood snakes slithering beside her.

She was using the Blood sect's secret magic, Blood Snake Dance, which almost seemed like an enticing dance that accentuated her curvaceous form. Her movements were so alluring that Nie Tian couldn't help but glance at her a few times more.

Since her opponent was Jiang Lingzhu, it meant she was the strongest of all the disciples of the Blood sect who had been sent to the Green Illusion dimension.

After realizing this, Nie Tian immediately viewed her as his target, and prepared to start fighting her.

Seeing Nie Tian's appearance, and knowing that the trial takers from the Spiritual Treasure sect were also going to arrive, Yu Tong seemed overtly anxious.

It seemed that she knew that, with conventional means, she couldn't possibly kill everyone from the Cloudsoaring sect before the Spiritual Treasure sect had arrived, so she had to pay some

price to do that.

It only took a second of hesitation before she made the painful decision, and yelled, “Forbidden Blood Technique: Blood Shadows!”

Instantly, her pupils turned blood-red.

An intense bloody aura started to build up in her exquisite body. She bit the tip of her tongue and formed an incantation with both her hands, as if she was drawing something towards the earth.

It was also in this moment that her glowing, red cheeks suddenly turned pale.

It appeared that she had consumed so much of her power to cast this single incantation that she almost collapsed.

“Finish off your opponents, now!” she shouted sternly.

Nie Tian, who was about to launch an attack, looked over with rapt attention, and his expression abruptly flickered.

In front of his very eyes, blood spewed violently out from the scattered spirit beast corpses and the two dead disciples of the Cloudsoaring sect!

Unbelievably, the blood spiraled up into the sky and started



converging together!

In an extremely short period of time, the blood had formed into ten blood shadows!

They floated about in midair, completely uninfluenced by gravity. They were like devils made of blood, which swooped threateningly towards Nie Xian and the others.

“Forbidden Blood Technique – Reverse Blood Flow!”

Upon Yu Tong’s command, the other four Blood sect disciples also let out frightening shouts.

In a flash, their pupils also turned as scarlet as blood, making them appear extremely malevolent and frightening.

A strange magnetic field was generated within their bodies, which rapidly expanded out in every direction.

PUFF!

Nie Xian, who had been forced backwards, became enveloped by the magnetic field, and as soon as he did, he coughed up a mouthful of blood and fell into the lake.

Under the influence of the strange magnetic field, the rest of the Cloudsoaring sect disciples also fell back, their faces as red as if

they had been struck hard by an unknown force.

Gradually the strange magnetic field reached Nie Tian.

“Huh?!”

Nie Tian’s expression also suddenly flickered when it struck him, because the moment he was struck by the magnetic field, his blood actually started to flow in reverse!

The reversing of his blood flow caused disorder in his spiritual sea, making him unable to gather his spiritual power.

At that time, he immediately understood why when the four Blood sect disciples cast the Forbidden Blood Technique: Reverse Blood Flow, Nie Xian and the others instantly lost battle power, and could only stagger backwards.

Yu Tong coldly ordered, “Seize this opportunity and kill them all!”

WHOOSH!

Under the influence of the Forbidden Blood Technique, Jiang Lingzhu didn’t dare to fight her head on, and immediately retreated.

However, the blood shadows floating in the air violently threw

themselves at the crowd, like vicious demons.

An anxious look stretched across Nie Tian's face, and he couldn't help but turn his head to check if An Ying and the others had arrived.

Unfortunately, they were still more than a hundred meters away, with Tong Hao and the rest even farther away.

“I can't wait any more!”

Desperately anxious, his eyes emanated malicious light, and wrath brewed in his heart.

In this very moment, he was amazed to find that the reversed flow of his blood had stopped.

It seemed that he had dispelled the effects the Forbidden Blood Technique had on his blood very quickly.

Rage seethed Nie Tian's eyes. Without another thought, he gathered all his strength and bolted towards Yu Tong.

“Raging punch!”

Pure, rich spiritual power instantly streamed into his arm.

He raised his hand high into the air, his clenched fist shining with an aura as bright as a torch!

Endless rage was generated in his heart and channeled to his fist, making it burn with tremendous waves of anger, and its momentum was also extremely astonishing.

Even before he approached Yu Tong, she could sense that something strange was going on, and her expression suddenly flickered.

For unknown reasons, Yu Tong had the bizarre sensation that the power of rage in Nie Tian's fist was something that could kill her with merely one punch.

Fear stretched across her face.

“Blood shadows, return to master!”

In a split second, each and every malevolent blood shadow blurred into action, as if they had turned into motes of blood-colored light.

In the next second, seven blood shadows arrived in front of Yu Tong.

The seven of them lined up in a row, facing Nie Tian, before they successively threw themselves at him.

“Die!”

Nie Tian let out an explosive roar, throwing out his punch, which was filled with spiritual energy and raging fury.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Under the destructive power of Nie Tian’s punch, each and every blood shadow exploded, splashing about and filling the sky with a bloody mist.

Even lined up in a row, the seven blood shadows failed to stop the momentum of the punch, and were completely destroyed.

The power of the punch wasn’t weakened in the slightest, and continued to barrel towards Yu Tong.

At this moment, Yu Tong’s flickering red eyes turned grim as her delicate fingers shifted to another incantation. “Forbidden Blood Technique – Blood Shield!”

Upon her words, her blood seemed to have been sucked out of her, and that exquisite and curvy body of hers suddenly shriveled up.

WHOOKSH! WHOOKSH! WHOOKSH!

A large amount of blood light suddenly shot out, turning into a small blood shield right in front of her.

It was exactly when the blood shield took form that Nie Tian's punch arrived.

BOOM!

The next moment, the blood shield exploded with a loud crash, splashing specks of blood-colored light around.

Yu Tong let out a muffled coughing sound, and blood spilt out from the corners of her dark-red lips.

SHEW!

She turned into a blood shadow herself, and retreated through air like a floating ghost.

However, she could only remain in the air for a moment. After landing on the ground, she ran off into the distance without looking behind her. "Let's get out of here! "

The moment they heard Yu Tong's order, the other four Blood sect disciples also left the battlefield. They knew that even if they could fight for a little longer, they would still be unable to kill all the Cloudsoaring sect disciples.

Likewise turning into four blood shadows, they fled along with Yu Tong.

After consuming all of his spiritual power with his one punch, Nie Tian couldn't help but drop to the ground, panting heavily.

Nie Xian and others were still influenced by the forbidden technique, Reverse Blood Flow, and could only watch Yu Tong and the other four leave.

BANG!

When Yu Tong disappeared in the distance, the remaining three blood shadows also exploded, turning into pools of blood that fell to the ground.

It was only then that An Ying, Pan Tao, and Zheng Rui finally arrived.

“Where are they?”

“Where are the Blood sect's people?”

“That way!” Jiang Lingzhu pointed towards the direction that Yu Tong had escaped. “Chase them! They're hurt. Do your best to kill them!”

“Are you alright?” An Ying asked concernedly.

“I’m fine! Go! Chase them down!” Jiang Lingzhu said anxiously.

“Alright!”

Knowing Tong Hao, Guo Qi, and the rest of the group were right behind them, An Ying, Pan Tao, and Zheng Rui decided to go after the Blood sect disciples.

After they left, Jiang Lingzhu, who had just broken away from the forbidden technique Reverse Blood Flow, blinked and looked at Nie Tian with a burning gaze in her eyes.

It wasn’t just her. Nie Xian, who had just crawled out from the lake, was also staring at Nie Tian with incomparable astonishment in his eyes, as if this was the first day that he came to know this clan brother of his.

Also from the Cloudsoaring sect, Ye Gumo, who had escaped death moments ago, looked blankly at Nie Tian before asking Jiang Lingzhu, “He’s the Nie Tian you talked about?! The one who uncle Li asked us to look after in the Green Illusion dimension?”

Jiang Lingzhu felt somewhat embarrassed, nodding briefly. “Yes, he is.”

“He needs us to take care of him?” Ye Gumo said with a complicated expression, “As I was retreating in defeat just now, I clearly saw that he destroyed the evil woman’s seven blood



shadows with one single punch, and even shattered her blood shield. He was the one who fought off that evil witch with one strike of his fist. He... really needs us to take care of him?”

After a brief moment of silence, Ye Gumo shook his head, and joked, “Junior martial sister, you probably heard wrong. Perhaps, uncle Li meant for him to take care of us in the Green Illusion dimension.”

Jiang Lingzhu laughed and finally relaxed. “Hahaha, I might have heard him wrong then.”

# Chapter 53: The Energy Is Seven Times Richer!

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It wasn't until now that Guo Qi, Tong Hao, and the others who had been lagging behind, finally arrived.

“Nie Tian!”

“Are you alright?”

“Where's brother Tao and the others?” asked Guo Qi.

“They went after the people from the Blood sect.” With these words, Nie Tian took out a huge piece of spirit beast meat and threw it to Jiang Miao, saying, “Help me roast this up, please.”

It had been some time since they last ran into any spirit beasts, and thus there wasn't much meat left strapped to Nie Tian's back.

Now, he only had several dozen kilograms worth of spirit beast meat left, barely enough for himself.

However, just as he handed the piece of meat to Jiang Miao, an idea suddenly came to him, and he slowly turned to look at the spirit beasts which had been killed by the Cloudsoaring sect disciples, especially the Lurker Lizard!

The Lurker Lizard was a second grade spirit beast. After suffering

from severe wounds, it had fled to the desert, but somehow had been located by Jiang Lingzhu and her team, and after a fierce battle, they finally slaughtered it.

The Lurker Lizard's head had already been chopped off, yet its body was still lying by the lakeside.

Compared to first grade spirit beasts, second grade spirit beasts were stronger by a large extent. Therefore, the energy contained in their meat was also much richer.

Having drained his spiritual sea with his raging punch, Nie Tian urgently needed to recover spiritual power.

The Lurker Lizard's meat was without doubt the best supplement for him at the moment.

After a moment of hesitation, he looked furtively at Jiang Lingzhu and asked, "I don't want the Lurker Lizard's head, but can I have some of its meat...? I'm a little hungry."

"Hahaha, even if you want its head, I'll give it to you, not to mention its meat." Jiang Lingzhu's bright eyes glittered charming light as she smiled. Then, she turned to Ye Gumo and said, "Eldest Brother Ye, Nie Tian is hungry and wants some cooked Lurker Lizard meat."

"Of course, I'll roast it for him myself!" Ye Gumo answered heartily.

With these words, Ye Gumo stretched out his arm and gave Nie Tian a thumbs-up, before he went to cut off meat from the Lurker Lizard and roast it.

By that time, two of Nie Tian's acquaintances, Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian, arrived by his side.

"Are you okay?" Jiang Lingzhu asked concernedly.

Nie Tian shook his head. "It's just that I've spent a lot of energy, so I'm extremely weak at the moment. All I need is some rest though."

"Nie Tian, you... what cultivation stage are you in?" Nie Xian asked curiously.

Previously, he saw Nie Tian completely crush Yu Tong's blood shadows and shatter the shield that she had formed by drawing upon all of her blood power.

As a result, the injured Yu Tong had no choice other than to retreat once she saw Pan Tao and the others about to arrive.

The power of Nie Tian's punch had left an extremely deep impression on Nie Xian. As a matter of fact, he didn't even believe his own eyes.

According to his memory, when he left the Nie clan and was received by Li Fan of the Cloudsoaring sect, Nie Tian had only been in the fourth level of Qi Refining

Back then, Nie Tian hadn't stood out in any aspect, except that he had a strong and robust body.

Who could have imagined that a year later, Nie Tian would be able to fight off Yu Tong with one punch?

Nie Tian answered, "Well... I just broke through into the seventh level of Qi Refining a few days ago."

"From the fourth to the seventh level in a year's time..." Nie Xian murmured, gazing at Nie Tian as though he was looking at a monster.

Jiang Lingzhu also stared at him in shock, while her jaw almost dropped to the ground. "How could you have possibly done that?!!"

She had personally witnessed Nie Tian and Yun Song's battle in Black Cloud City, and was positive that he was only in the fourth level of Qi Refining at that time.

Although she was experienced and knowledgeable in the Cloudsoaring sect, the fact that Nie Tian had leaped from the fourth level to the seventh level in a year's time left her flabbergasted.

“I’ve been lucky.” Nie Tian chuckled.

While they were talking, An Ying, Pan Tao, and Zheng Rui returned, looked disheartened.

“Those Blood sect disciples weren’t even a bit slower than those of the Ghost sect,” An Ying said. Arriving by Jiang Lingzhu’s side, she sighed, and said, “I thought we could find you in the desert, and with your help go back and kill the Ghost sect disciples. I didn’t expect that Blood sect disciples had also entered the Green Illusion dimension.”

Upon hearing her words, each and every trial taker from the Cloudsoaring sect revealed expressions of shock.

“What?!”

“You ran into disciples from the Ghost sect?” Jiang Lingzhu exclaimed.

“Well, we can be considered the luckier ones.” Pan Tao said with a bitter smile, “It was the Grayvale sect that suffered tragic loss. Only from what we’ve seen, five of them were killed by the Ghost sect, and they were slaughtered in ways... I can’t even bear to see.”

“They also killed one of ours,” Zheng Rui said in a low voice.

“The Blood sect, the Ghost sect...” Jiang Lingzhu’s brows twisted, and her small face seemed to be clouded by a haze. “I’ve no idea what’s going on with the Mystic Mist sect. I hope they aren’t as unfortunate. From now on, we’d better stick together and find the disciples from the Mystic Mist sect and the Grayvale sect as soon as possible. Only united will we be able to contend with the Blood sect and the Ghost sect.”

“Our plan was to find you guys in the desert, so that we can go back together to the glacier area to kill the Ghost Sect disciples,” An Ying explained.

“Once the Ghost sect and the Blood sect find out that we’ve joined forces, they’ll also cooperate,” said Pan Tao.

Jiang Lingzhu thought for a moment, and continued, “The trial of the Green Illusion dimension has just become ten times more dangerous than I thought it would be. We need to recover our strength as soon as possible, so that we can be ready for any upcoming battles. Let’s get started.”

“Everybody hurry and use your spirit stones to recover!”

With Ye Gumo being the only exception, all the survivors of the Cloudsoaring sect stopped talking and sat down cross-legged.

Every one of them had grim looks on their faces and didn’t dare to relax for one more moment.

They originally thought that after joining hands with the Spiritual Treasure sect, Yu Tong and the other Blood sect disciples would no longer be a threat to them.

However, they could never have expected the Spiritual Treasure sect disciples would enter the desert to ask for their help to deal with the Ghost sect.

The news of the Ghost sect entering the Green Illusion dimension had made them feel that the road ahead was going to be much more difficult. With the corpses of their two teammates lying beside them, the survivors all knew that they had to be alert at all times if they didn't wish to end up dead too.

An Ying and her group also lost their interest in talking, and became caught up in their thoughts.

About this time, Ye Gumo arrived by Nie Tian's side with a dozen kilograms worth of meat. He handed the meat over to Nie Tian, thinking it must be more than enough. "Here you go. The Lurker Lizard meat you wanted."

After Nie Tian took it over, Ye Gumo went back to sit down next to Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian, and also took out a spirit stone to recover.

"That piece of meat is far from enough for him," Pan Tao mumbled. "We've been on the run for a while, and haven't had the time to eat a proper meal. There is more than enough spirit beast meat here. Since we didn't participate in the battle just now and



don't need to recover, let's enjoy a good meal."

He strode to the Lurker Lizard.

Ye Gumo didn't know how big Nie Tian's appetite was, and thought a piece of meat more than ten kilograms should be more than enough for him.

Having spent so much time with Nie Tian, Pan Tao knew very well that Nie Tian still needed at least five times more spirit beast meat to fill up his stomach. Therefore, he was actually scraping up a good meal for Nie Tian.

"Nie Tian, this is the meat I've roasted for you." Jiang Miao walked towards him with a thick tree branch in her hand, which had a piece of cooked meat on it that was more than ten kilograms.

Nie Tian took it into his hands, and expressed his gratitude.

However, Jiang Miao didn't leave, but rather watched him eat with an expectant look in her eyes.

Seeing that Nie Tian first ate the meat that she had roasted for him, instead of the lurker Lizard's meat, she put on a sweet smile and said, "I'll roast some more for you." With these words, she hopped away happily.

Immediately after the meat was down his throat, Nie Tian closed his eyes.

It was just a moment before he sensed a warm current swirling in his abdomen. When he used the Qi Refining Incantation, the strands of warm energy were channeled into his spiritual sea at a speed even faster than usual.

It was only an hour later that his drained up spiritual sea was filled by ten percent.

Moreover, no more warm current was generated in his abdomen. It seemed all the energy provided by the piece of meat had been completely absorbed in such a short time.

When he opened his eyes, he saw sticks of spirit beast meat strung onto large branches stuck into the sand by his side.

He looked around, and saw An Ying, Pan Tao, and the others were gathered together, eating and talking.

It seemed they knew that he would need a period of time to process the food after he had eaten, and thus intentionally left him alone. Those large sticks of spirit beast meat were the work of Jiang Miao and Pan Tao.

He deliberated for a moment before picking up the piece of Lurker Lizard meat that Ye Gumo had roasted a while ago, and started munching.

Moments later, more than ten kilograms worth of Lurker Lizard

meat went down his throat.

A slightly scorching current gradually appeared in his abdomen, and then energy several times richer than before suddenly dispersed out into his flesh and bones.

His eyes glittered, as he instantly started to practice the Qi Refining Incantation to direct the incomparably vigorous energy.

Strands of energy merged into warm streams before surging along his meridians towards his spiritual sea.

It was only a quarter of hour later that he found his spiritual sea had replenished by forty percent.

By this point, however, more energy was still being generated in his abdomen!

The power contained in the Lurker Lizard meat was clearly yet to be absorbed!

In good spirits, he concentrated again on gathering and absorbing the energy that had been dispersed into his body, before channeling it into his spiritual sea.

After an unknown period of time, when there were no more warmth in his belly, he discovered that his spiritual sea had been replenished by as much as eighty percent!

“Seven times!” He was shocked at heart.

With the same size, a piece of Lurker Lizard meat had generated seven times more energy than the first grade spirit beast meat!

He only had one piece of Lurker Lizard meat, and almost completely recovered all the spiritual power that he had previously consumed to throw the raging punch!

“Second grade spirit beast!”

Nie Tian stared at the corpse of the Lurker Lizard, that was more than a hundred meters away from him, and his eyes suddenly shone with a light of greed.

# Chapter 54: Help From The Heavens

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Nie Tian stared silently at the corpse of the Lurker Lizard.

It was after a long time that he finally retracted his gaze and pulled the skewers of Lurker Lizard meat out of the sand.

This time, he didn't rush to practice the Qi Refining Incantation and absorb the energy from the meat, but instead focused on simply devouring the meat.

Only after he ate several dozens of kilograms and couldn't force down another bite, did he finally stop, close his eyes, and sense the warm current flowing out from within his abdomen.

A surge of energy, several times richer than before, dispersed from within his stomach. However, when he practiced the Qi Refining Incantation, he found that he could no longer channel all of the power to his spiritual sea.

Before long, his spiritual sea went from being eighty percent full to being completely full to the brim.

As he continued to channel spiritual power into his spiritual sea, he found that the power was actually once again causing his spiritual sea to experience growth.

“Second grade spirit beasts have seven times the power!” His face remained expressionless; however, inwardly he was filled with

ecstasy.

Originally, he planned to use two months to break through into the eighth level of Qi Refining, with the help of the spirit beast meat.

However, after discovering the meat of the second grade Lurker Lizard could provide energy that was seven times richer, he suddenly found a new goal!

“If I can consume the Lurker Lizard all by myself, it would only take ten days to make a breakthrough to the eighth level of Qi Refining!”

Seized with ecstasy, he soon discovered that since his spiritual sea was already full, a large portion of the energy was starting to disperse into his flesh and bones.

The energy contained in the Lurker Lizard’s meat that he had just consumed was too much for him to quickly absorb and channel into his spiritual sea.

He suddenly felt like his body was like a giant sponge, greedily absorbing the dispersing energy.

Before he realized it, his body temperature had risen to the point where he was like a giant, human-shaped furnace.

Soon, he was soaked in sweat, and even his surroundings seemed

to be affected, as the temperature around him also rose rapidly.

They were in the desert, a place which was already extremely hot. It was only natural for the trial takers to be sweating.

However, Nie Tian's temperature wouldn't stop rising, giving him a terrific headache as turning his skin bright red.

"This...."

It was only at this point that he recalled how he had been afflicted by a high fever for several days after his battle with Nie Hong.

"Please don't let something like the last time happen!" he thought, starting to get worried.

At this very moment, Zheng Rui, who had been talking eloquently with the others, suddenly blurted, "Ughh! My stomach's feeling a bit upset, I think I need to go relieve myself."

With that, he rushed away, an embarrassed expression on his face.

Not long after he left, Pan Tao suddenly clutched his stomach, and then also left with an odd look on his face.

Just as An Ying was about to mock the two of them, she suddenly

trembled.

Trying to act as casual as ever, she said, “Eh, well, you guys guard the people from the Cloudsoaring sect, in case the Blood sect disciples come back. I’ll go check the perimeter.” With that, she sprang to her feet and walked off.

In the blink of an eye, An Ying, Zheng Rui, and Pan Tao left successively, each of them sporting a weird expression.

Some time later, Zheng Rui returned, the first of the small group to do so. The moment he sat down and was about to say something, his expression flickered again.

“What’s wrong, Brother Zheng?” Guo Qi asked, looking concerned.

“The runs,” Zheng Rui replied, rushing away with a bitter look on his face.

Not long after he was gone, Pan Tao returned, only to rush away moments later, face twisted with an odd expression.

An Ying never returned. Apparently she’d left for a long-term scouting operation.

An hour later, the three of them finally returned, looking so exhausted that they appeared to be on the verge of collapse.



“You also had the runs?” Pan Tao asked.

“Yeah,” replied An Ying. “You too?”

“Really?!” Zheng Rui exclaimed, his face pale. “You guys also had the runs?”

“Elder sister An Ying, you guys... ate the Lurker Lizard meat,” Jiang Miao said, trying to refrain from laughing, “Everybody else said the Lurker Lizard meat was too bitter, so no one wanted it. Only the three of you said that second grade spirit beast meat was the most delicious, and insisted on eating.”

Pan Tao was stunned. “It was the Lurker Lizard’s meat?”

It seemed as if something suddenly occurred to him; struggling to his feet, he looked at the distant Nie Tian.

“That guy had the most!” An Ying apparently recalled the same thing..

All of a sudden, every trial taker’s gaze converged onto Nie Tian.

They discovered that Nie Tian’s skin was very red and his entire body was dripping sweat, as if he was being baked on the shelf in an oven.

“His.. his symptoms seems to be different from yours,” said Tong Hao.

“I’ll go check on him.” Eyes full of worry, Jiang Miao rose to her feet and walked towards Nie Tian.

Pan Tao followed right after her. “I’ll go with you.”

As they approached, Nie Tian finally finished cultivating and opened his eyes.

He could no long feel energy being generated in his belly, indicated that the Lurker Lizard meat had been fully digested.

He was still dripping sweat all over and experiencing dizziness from the high temperature.

However, he didn’t pass out this time.

To his surprise, he noticed that the sweat that had come out of his pores was murky, as if it was carrying his inner filth.

As his inner filth was expelled together with the sweat, his excruciatingly high temperature finally began to drop.

By the time Jiang Miao and Pan Tao arrived by his side, his skin, originally as red as a cooked shrimp, had already returned to its normal color.

THUMP! THUMP!

The sound of Jiang Miao and Pan Tao's footsteps seemed much louder than they actually were.

When he looked up at Pan Tao, he was able to acutely detect even the fine hairs on the corners of his mouth with a single glance.

"My hearing and vision have been greatly enhanced!" he thought, shocked by his discoveries.

When he rose to his feet, he felt as light as a bird and completely refreshed, as if his body had just undergone a mysterious transformation.

"Are you okay, Nie Tian?" Pan Tao asked with a wry smile, as he subconsciously touched his belly. "Do you feel any discomfort?"

"I had a fever just now, but I'm fine now," Nie Tian said.

Pan Tao continued asking, "You don't feel any discomfort in your stomach? No urge to relieve yourself?"

Nie Tian shook his head, puzzled. "Why do you ask?"

Pan Tao forced a smile. "An Ying, Zheng Rui, and I. We all had the runs after eating the Lurker Lizard meat. I even had difficulty

walking. It really took a lot out of us.”

“Shut up, Pan Tao!” An Ying said, cheek flushed.

After all, she was a girl. When this kind of thing happened to her, it was natural that she became embarrassed and didn’t want others to talk about it.

Pan Tao smiled and winked at Nie Tian. “You ate ten times as much Lurker Lizard meat as the rest of us combined. Don’t tell me you don’t feel anything!”

“You guys all had the runs?” Nie Tian was more happy than shocked. Looking very concerned, he asked, “Are you alright? You’re not like me. I’m strong enough to fully digest the Lurker Lizard’s meat. But you’re all noble and delicate. You’d better be more careful, and don’t harm yourselves by eating the wrong stuff.”

The moment he had discovered that the energy the Lurker Lizard meat could provide exceeded the first grade spirit beasts’ by seven times, he laid his eyes on the Lurker Lizard.

Just recently, he had also discovered that the dispersed energy that he hadn’t been able to refine into his spiritual sea flowed into his flesh and bones, also bringing him major benefits.

Therefore, he secretly made up his mind that even if he couldn’t do anything else in the next two days, he would eat as much Lurker

Lizard meat as possible.

He originally planned to eat more of the second grade spirit beast meat than everyone else by relying on his incomparably large appetite, so as to improve his strength as fast as he could.

However, the fact that An Ying and the others actually had diarrhea after eating the Lurker Lizard meat went beyond his expectations.

He couldn't help but exclaim in his heart, "Heaven is helping me!"

"I'm glad that you are fine." Pan Tao looked at him out of the corner of his eye while thinking to himself, "This guy is a monster..."

The three of them only had about a kilogram of the Lurker Lizard meat before they couldn't take it anymore, and were struck with terrible diarrhea.

However, the amount Nie Tian had was ten times more than the three of them combined. Although he looked a bit uncomfortable earlier, right now he seemed to be brimming with energy again.

Pan Tao had no choice but respect Nie Tian's uniqueness.

As of this moment, Jiang Lingzhu had finally recovered her strength with the help of spirit stones, and woke up. She called out

towards where An Ying and her group was, “Elder Sister An Ying, let’s talk about what to do next, shall we? Nie Tian, you come as well.”

“Come on. Let’s go,” Pan Tao said.

“No, I’m beat. I need more rest. You guys go ahead and talk.” Nie Tian shook his head, and smiled at Jiang Miao, who had concern written all over her face. “I’m okay now. Thanks for your concern.”

Jiang Miao hurriedly answered, “Um, it’s good that you’re fine.”

After rejecting the invitation, Nie Tian silently sat back down with his eyes closed.

No longer sweating, he now felt more energetic and powerful than ever. This made him suddenly want to try out the perception range of his spiritual awareness.

When he had calmed his heart and concentrated his mind, he gradually released his psychic power outwards in every direction.

After ten breaths of time, his eyes snapped open, glittering with the bright light of excitement.

“Seventy meters of coverage!”

# Chapter 55: Reversal of the Wheel of Fate

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“Seventy meters!”

Nie Tian’s eyes shone with a bright light as he sat there upright, trembling slightly with elation.

Not long ago, when they were searching for the Frost Python in the glacier area, the range of his psychic awareness was merely fifty meters.

That was the best he could achieve after several significant upgrades, as well as after exhausting his psychic power several times in a row.

Clearly, he didn’t expect that after eating the Lurker Lizard meat and strengthening himself he would have such a significant improvement in psychic power.

“Good stuff! It’s absolutely good stuff!”

As soon as he remembered that An Ying and others had diarrhea after having the Lurker Lizard meat, he couldn’t help but start cheering in his heart.

The second grade spirit beast meat could not only speed up his cultivation, but it could also strengthen his fleshy body.

The strength of his fleshy body, on the other hand, could benefit his psychic power, enabling him to holistically increase his strength!

As of that moment, he suddenly felt much more excited about the Green Illusion dimension trial, as if the Ghost sect and the Blood sect weren't the terrifying entities he'd thought them to be.

As for the discussion between Jiang Lingzhu and An Ying, he had completely lost interest. All he wanted to do was consume all the Lurker Lizard meat as fast as possible.

“But the weather in the desert...”

Looking over towards the distant corpse of the Lurker Lizard, his brows furrowed as a question occurred to him.

The desert was different from the glacier area, where he was able to carry raw spirit beast meat on his back without any trouble.

Because of the cold weather there, spirit beast meat could remain fresh for a long time before it spoiled.

In the desert, however, it was burning hot. Without special processing, meat would rot fairly rapidly in a short time, making it inedible.

“From the look of it, I need to air-dry the meat. Only in this way will I be able to carry it with me and consume it over a longer



period of time.”

With these thoughts, he stood up and took a step towards the Lurker Lizard corpse.

Seeing him rise to his feet, Jiang Miao didn't think twice before hurrying to catch up. Curious, she asked, “Nie Tian, what do you want to do?”

“I'm going to make some Lurker Lizard jerky!” he answered.

“Let me help you!” said Jiang Miao.

Nie Tian was surprised. “Do you know how?”

“Nope.” Jiang Miao replied honestly. “But you can teach me.”

“I don't know how either,” Nie Tian said, smiling wryly.

“Ahhh?!” Jiang Miao turned to look at Guo Qi who was sitting not far from them. “Eldest Brother Guo, do you know how to make jerky with spirit beast meat?”

“Sure,” Guo Qi replied.

“We may not run into more spirit beasts in the desert, and we'll still need to eat,” Jiang Miao said. “Since elder sister An Ying and

those guys are in discussion, and we don't have much else to do, why don't we make jerky out of the spirit beast meat?" Said Jiang Miao.

"Okay, I'm in," Guo Qi said, nodding.

When they were in the glacier region, and the Ghost sect disciple had suddenly showed up wearing the Grayvale sect's clothes, Guo Qi had nearly been ambushed and killed. Thanks to Nie Tian's acute perception, and the immediate attack he launched upon the Ghost sect disciple, Guo Qi had narrowly escaped.

No matter how he used to think of Nie Tian, now that Nie Tian had saved his life, he nodded in consent, even though he wasn't completely willing.

Ye Gumo from the Cloudsoaring sect smiled and said, "I'll help you guys, too."

He didn't participate in the discussion among Jiang Lingzhu, An Ying, and the others. As soon as he had finished recovering with his spirit stones, he sat down at a place not far away from Nie Tian, secretly observing him.

He caught every word of the conversation between Nie Tian and Jiang Miao, and realized that making spirit beast jerky would provide sufficient food for everyone to eat for a long time.

Since they were grouped together now, and wouldn't split up in

their future endeavors, they needed to work together. Therefore, he stepped up.

“Thanks,” Nie Tian said, smiling.

Ye Gumo laughed out loud and said, “You’re welcome, we’re doing it for everybody.”

While talking, Nie Tian and Jiang Miao started cutting meat off the spirit beasts with Ye Gumo and Guo Qi’s assistance.

After discussing for a while, it seemed that An Ying and the others had finally reached an agreement.

When they saw that Nie Tian and his companies were making jerky, they also realized that it could solve their future food problem, so they all pitched in.

However, before getting started, Pan Tao released another signal into the air.

A pitch-black line of smoke shot up into the heavens, distinctly visible in the desert sky.

“Now that we’ve restored our full strength, even if the evil witch returns, we won’t fear her any more.” Pan Tao arrived by Nie Tian’s side and said, “Although the Grayvale sect’s Yuan Feng is a troublemaker, he isn’t stupid. Since he has been attacked by the Ghost sect in the glacier area, he won’t dare to stay there any

more.

“As long as Yuan Feng is alive, he’ll definitely come to the desert like we did.

“Perhaps Yuan Feng has already led the Grayvale sect’s survivors into the desert. It’s hard to say.

“This signal is intended for Yuan Feng and his group,” Pan Tao explained to Nie Tian while cutting meat off the Lurker Lizard. “I hope they can find us the way we found the Cloudsoaring sect’s people.”

“We’re not going to return to the glacier area?” Nie Tian asked.

Pan Tao was very frank. “No, we’re not. The people from the Blood sect are currently here in the desert. If we were to head over to the glacier region, the Blood sect and the Ghost sect would very quickly join forces. Therefore, we made the decision to wait for a short while to give the Grayvale sect a chance to find us.

“The signal has been released. If they don’t show up any time soon, it probably means that they are dead.

“In that case, if we make a rushed decision and go back to the glacier area, we would possibly have to face the Ghost sect and the Blood sect with just our two sects’ forces.

“That wouldn’t be the wisest move.”

Nie Tian was surprised by his words. “Do you plan to set up camp in the desert?”

“No.” Pan Tao shook his head. “Whether Yuan Feng and his group can find us or not, we’ll leave the desert, and go look for Zheng Bin of the Mystic Mist sect in the volcano area. Upon entering the Green Illusion dimension, Jiang Lingzhu and Zheng Bin already had an agreement that Jiang Lingzhu would lead her group to the desert, while Zheng Bin would lead his group to the volcano area.

“The Grayvale sect has suffered great casualties. Even if Yuan Feng is still alive, he won’t have many left in his group.

“They won’t be able to provide much help. Plus, for all we know, the Ghost sect might be going after them.

“So, for everyone’s sake, we’ve decided to look for Zheng Bin of the Mystic Mist sect in the volcano area.

“We figured they shouldn’t be in any worse state than the Grayvale sect. If they haven’t come across people from the Hell sect, their group should still be intact.

“With their help, we’ll become a lot stronger.”

After a moment of pondering, Nie Tian understood that because the Grayvale sect had lost too many people, they already

considered the Mystic Mist sect as their best choice. Besides, there was still an unknown number of Ghost sect disciples hovering about in the glacier area.

The signal Pan Tao had released was the last chance for Yuan Feng and his men. If he failed to show up after the smoke dissipated, they would completely give up on him.

That was cold, yet the wisest decision. Deep down, Nie Tian agreed to it.

The black smoke hung high in the desert sky, while everyone worked as one under the guidance of the experienced members, like Pan Tao and Ye Gumo, to process the spirit beast meat into jerky.

After learning that An Ying and her group had diarrhea after eating the Lurker Lizard meat, the Cloudsoaring sect's disciples all voluntarily distanced themselves from it.

The trial takers of the Spiritual Treasure sect had witnessed An Ying's misery, and also didn't dare to even touch the Lurker Lizard meat.

As the result, after the second grade Lurker Lizard jerky was processed, all of it went into Nie Tian's backpack.

After floating in the sky for a long time, the black smoke eventually dissipated.

An Ying said with a plain face, “If Yuan Feng saw the signal right before it disappeared, he should be able to arrive here in an hour. We’ll wait for another hour. If they don’t show up in an hour, then there will be no use for us to keep on waiting.”

Jiang Lingzhu agreed. “Alright, let’s wait for one more hour then.”

Zheng Rui snorted and said with a hateful tone, “That Yuan Feng guy was a real asshole. It wouldn’t be a bad thing if he actually died. Back when we were in the glacier area, he almost started a war with us over Nie Tian. Even if that guy survived, I’m afraid he will bring us more trouble in the future.”

Puzzled, Jiang Lingzhu asked, “Why did he demand Nie Tian from you?”

“Ask him yourself.” Zheng Rui pointed at Nie Tian.

Jiang Lingzhu thus looked over towards Nie Tian.

Nie Tian was busy dealing with the Lurker Lizard meat when he heard them. He said, “Do you still remember the battle between me and Yun Song in front of the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion the other day?”

“Of course, I do.”

“Yun Song is Yuan Feng’s cousin.”

“Ah, so that’s how it is.”

“The Yuan clan...” said Nie Xian, eyebrows furrowed, face cold. “They live far away in Frost Stone City, yet constantly used underhanded ways to cause trouble for our clan. It would be the best if Yuan Feng died in the glacier area, so that I won’t need to look at him any more!”

As a member of the Nie clan, he clearly knew that because of Yuan Qiuying, the Nie clan had been suppressed by the Yuan clan for years.

Moreover, Nie Donghai had been injured by powerful experts of the Yun clan and the Yuan clan. This had fueled his hatred towards Yuan Feng even further.

“I heard something!” Jiang Lingzhu’s expression flickered, as she looked in the direction of the glacier region. “Be careful everyone. If it’s Ghost sect disciples, immediately attack and kill them all!”

“Very well!” Everyone chimed in with her.

“It’s Yuan Feng!”

Soon, Yuan Feng and Yun Song appeared in the distant horizon.



At first glance, both of them seemed to have lost a lot of weight, and their tattered clothes were covered in bloodstains.

It was hard to tell whether those bloodstains were their own or from Ghost sect disciples.

Faces pale and eyes spiritless, they had completely lost their previously imposing aura.

As soon as they approached and saw the trial takers from the Cloudsoaring sect and the Spiritual Treasure sect, Yuan Feng's eyes glittered with the light of hope.

“Finally, we’ve found you!” Yun Song cried out loud. “We ran into Ghost sect disciples in the glacier area! Everybody was killed. My cousin and I are the only survivors!”

He was trembling with the excitement of a drowning person who had just caught sight of a rescue boat. “It’s a good thing that you guys are here! Hurry. Let’s go back to the glacier area and kill each and every one of them!”

An Ying cast a cold look towards Yuan Feng. “We’ve waited for you for a long time. Let’s go. Don’t waste our time. We’re heading to the volcano area to find Zheng Bin from the Mystic Mist sect.”

Yun Song yelled, “Why do we go find them? We should return to the glacier area to kill off the Ghost sect disciples, and then continue with our trial!”

“Shut the hell up!” Zheng Rui put on an unfriendly expression. “We’ve already taken a huge risk by waiting for you. I don’t care how many of you died! As long as you’re with us, you’ll take orders from us. You’re in no position to tell us what to do!”

“Cousin.” Yun Song looked piteously at Yuan Feng.

Yuan Feng’s swept everyone with his bleak gaze, and after a moment of silence, he said coldly, “Listen to them.”

If he still had his team, Yuan Feng would never fear the Spiritual Treasure sect or the Cloudsoaring sect. However, times had changed. The only people who remained on his team were himself and Yun Song. They could only listen to the other two sects.

“We have a lot of spirit beast jerky,” Nie Tian mentioned. “Somebody has to carry it for us. Why don’t we let them do it? What do you guys say?”

“I agree!” An Ying nodded.

“It’s only fair!” Zheng Rui chiming in.

Jiang Lingzhu agreed. “Yeah, they have to do something.”

Yun Song said angrily, “We haven’t had the chance to recover yet!”

Nie Tian grinned. “We don’t need people who don’t work.”

“Fine, I’ll do it!” said Yuan Feng, voice cold and firm.

“Well then, I’ll do it, too.” Yun Song had no choice but act obediently.

“Good, now this is the way to behave,” said Nie Tian, with a foxy smile.

# Chapter 56: Leaving The Team

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In a desolate corner of the desert...

Yu Tong and four other Blood sect disciples were sitting on a sand dune. It seemed as if they were waiting for something.

Dressed in red garments, Yu Tong was holding an ocarina in her slender, jade-like hands, and blowing into it with her plump red lips.

However, not a sound came from within the ocarina.

In the meantime...

Several miles from her, Mo Xi from the Ghost sect was also holding a similar ocarina, and held it to his ear from time to time, seemingly listening attentively to something.

From the look of it, he was trying to determine a direction.

After a long time, he led the other four Ghost sect disciples to where Yu Tong was.

By that point, Yu Tong had long since stopped playing the ocarina.

After arriving, Mo Xi instructed the others to find a place to sit,

and then walked to Yu Tong's side, looking at her, his eyes brimming with unruly desire.

A strong desire was hidden in the depths of his eyes. "How did your battle turn out?"

"The Cloudsoaring sect's trial takers were in the desert, hunting for the Lurker Lizard," Yu Tong stated in a cold voice. "We killed two of them before they ran into the Lurker Lizard, and killed two more after their battle with it. The Cloudsoaring sect still has six people left, we... should've been able to kill them all."

"Something went wrong?" Mo Xi asked with a frown.

"Right at the crucial moment, the people from the Spiritual Treasure sect got there." Yu Tong snorted. "The Spiritual Treasure sect came from the glacier area. Because you didn't finish your job, we failed in ours."

Huffing, Du Kun from the Ghost sect said, "Yu Tong! Not only did we run into the Spiritual Treasure sect in the glacier area, but we also encountered the disciples of the Grayvale sect!"

If Nie Tian was present, he would be able to tell with a single glance that Du Kun was the one who had disguised himself as a Grayvale sect disciple and attacked them.

Mo Xi waved his hand, signaling Du Kun not to interrupt, and said, "We slaughtered eight of the ten Grayvale sect disciples. Only

Yuan Feng and his younger cousin managed to escape. We also killed one of the Spiritual Treasure sect's people. It was a pity that we spent too much time chasing after Yuan Feng, and thus didn't have the time and energy to finish off the Spiritual Treasure sect."

"Whatever," Yu Tong said indifferently. "Now the Spiritual Treasure sect and the Cloudsoaring sect have joined hands, and I even noticed that they've headed out toward the volcano area."

"The people from the Mystic Mist sect should be hunting in the volcano area. We should strike the Spiritual Treasure sect and the Cloudsoaring sect as soon as possible, before they join forces with the Mystic Mist sect."

After a moment of thinking, Mo Xi said, "The Cloudsoaring sect has six people alive. If Yuan Feng and his cousin joined them, they would have eight people. When Du Kun last met the Spiritual Treasure sect's people, there were thirteen of them. Du Kun killed one, so that leaves them twelve people."

"If the Spiritual Treasure sect didn't suffer from more casualties, together with the Cloudsoaring sect and the Grayvale sect's guys, there should be a total of twenty of them now. We, on the other hand, have a total of ten."

With these words, he grinned viciously. "But among those twenty, many have zero battle experience. As long as we can catch up to them, it should be pretty easy to kill all of them."

He kept stroking his thumb bone necklace as he spoke.

Yu Tong glanced at him, and found that the bone necklace around his neck seemed to have gotten longer, which meant that he had killed several more opponents of his cultivation stage in the glacier area.

“There was a punk named Nie Tian on the Spiritual Treasure sect team,” Yu Tong said suddenly. “Do you know anything about him?”

“Nie Tian?” Mo Xi shook his head, looking puzzled. “No, I’ve never heard of him. Why?”

A cold light flashed in Yu Tong’s eye. “He wounded me.”

Mo Xi looked at her, confused. “With your strength, even An Ying would fall prey to you. A kid we’ve never heard of could hurt you? Were you being sloppy?”

Face long, Yu Tong didn’t respond.

It was then that Du Kun spoke up, his voice soft. “I have a bit of an impression of this Nie Tian.”

Mo Xi and Yu Tong both turned to look at him.

Du Kun’s eyes narrowed until his expression was completely ferocious. “I wore the robes of the Grayvale sect to get close to the

group from the Spiritual Treasure sect. I wanted to catch them off guard and kill them one by one. But Nie Tian noticed something was wrong, and attacked me before I even made a move. If it weren't for him, I would have been able to kill at least three of the Spiritual Treasure sect brats."

"This Nie Tian guy... is pretty interesting." Mo Xi nodded briefly, memorizing his name, and then turned to Yu Tong. "When we catch up to them, I'll personally capture that Nie Tian, and let you use your blood refining technique to refine every drop of his blood, so that you can vent your anger."

Yu Tong wasn't grateful at all. "Those I want to kill, I'll kill them myself. I won't bother you with it."

"Hahaha!" Mo Xi laughed. "Whatever. I've laid my eyes on Nie Tian anyways. I'll capture him before you do. When that comes, if you don't want him, I'll just tear him apart myself."

"Stop wasting time," Yu Tong said, her face expressionless. "Let's go. We've got to catch up to them before they leave the desert, otherwise they might join hands with those from the Mystic Mist sect."

...

At this time, somewhere else in the desert...

Nie Tian was indulging himself in eating again.



It had been two days since Yuan Feng and Yun Song joined them and they set out as a large group.

For the past two days, everyone had been marching at a fast pace with very limited resting time, hoping to leave the desert and meet with Zheng Bin and his group in the volcano area as soon as possible.

Since there wasn't enough time for cultivation, Nie Tian's plan to use the Lurker Lizard meat to enter the eighth level of Qi Refining within ten days would very likely end up down the drain.

Now that they finally stopped to rest, Nie Tian didn't want to waste any time, so immediately, he took out some Lurker Lizard jerky, and began eating it at the fastest speed possible.

Only after he had stuffed several dozens kilograms of meat down his throat and couldn't eat another bite, did he finally stop.

Without any delay, he started to practice the Qi Refining Incantation.

While he was upgrading his spiritual sea with the Qi Refining Incantation, the energy that couldn't be absorbed once again dispersed into his flesh and bones.

Before long, he was burning up again, sweat pouring out from his pores.

And just like last time, the sweat that poured out of his body was mixed with murky filth.

After a long while, he opened his eyes. When he concentrated his mind and examined himself, he found that his spiritual sea had expanded by another ten percent.

Without any hesitation, he spread out his psychic power in all directions, with him as the center, and discovered that the range of his psychic power had enhanced to a seventy-eight meter radius.

“The improvement this time isn’t so great.”

Eyebrows furrowed, he went over the whole cultivating process in detail, before realizing that the energy generated in his belly this time was weaker compared to last time.

“The energy contained in the spirit beast meat must be decreasing. Energy contained in freshly killed spirit beast meat should be at its peak, and also can be absorbed the most easily.

“After a spirit beast dies, the energy in its meat will gradually vanish as time goes by.

“Also, by turning the spirit beast meat into jerky, I must have lost some of the energy in the blood.”

...

He peeled away the onion, searching for the reason that lay within.

As a matter of fact, back in the glacier area, he already had the feeling that the energy contained in the spirit beast meat decreased as time went by.

However, it was extremely cold in the glacier area, and therefore the spirit beast meat could remain fresh for a long time, making the energy loss in the meat less obvious.

It was natural that he felt the sudden rise in the energy loss rate of the spirit beast meat after they entered the desert.

Moreover, when everyone had turned the spirit beast meat into jerky, it seemed to have sped up the energy loss.

After having a clear understanding of the reasons behind it, he stared at the hundreds of kilograms of Lurker Lizard meat jerkies that he had been carrying, and suddenly felt somewhat distressed.

He realized that in order to make the best out of the Lurker Lizard meat, he would have to consume it all at the fastest speed possible.

In addition, he would need to stop traveling, and practice cultivation day and night.

Only in this way would he be able to make full use of the Lurker Lizard's meat and improve his cultivation base to the eighth level in a short time.

The more time passed, the less benefit he would be able to gain from the Lurker Lizard meat.

However at this time, everyone, with Jiang Lingzhu and An Ying as the leaders, wanted to leave the desert, and join forces with the Mystic Mist sect as soon as possible.

It would be impossible for them to slow down their pace, just for Nie Tian to cultivate.

Either he left the group, found a remote corner in the desert, and while bearing the risk of being found by the Ghost sect and Blood sect, cultivated day and night to break through into the eighth level at the fastest speed possible.

Or he missed out on the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and kept traveling safely with the group.

His face shifted between various expressions, and after a long pondering, he sprung to his feet, saying, "Sorry guys, I won't be able to travel with you and search for the Mystic Mist sect's guys any more."

# Chapter 57: Risky Cultivation

---

Despite the fact that everyone urged him to stay, Nie Tian still chose to leave the group.

The reason he gave was that the desert was more suitable for his cultivation.

Of course, Jiang Lingzhu and Pan Tao didn't believe that for a minute.

After all, only Qi warriors with a flame cultivation attribute would be able to rapidly enhance their cultivation bases in the desert.

However, so far there hadn't been any sign that Nie Tian had such a cultivation attribute.

Even if Nie Tian's cultivation attribute was indeed flame, the volcano area, where Zheng Bin and other Mystic Mist sect disciples were, should be a better place for him to cultivate.

Therefore, everyone was sure that it was merely an excuse. However, they still couldn't understand why Nie Tian chose to leave while they were facing the double threat of the Blood sect and the Ghost sect.

Meanwhile, Nie Tian didn't give them a reasonable explanation. He simply parted with the group while carrying hundreds of

kilograms of Lurker Lizard's meat on his back.

Having parted ways with the group, Nie Tian walked alone for half a day before coming to find a secluded sand dune. Then he started to devour the Lurker Lizard's meat non-stop, as he proceeded with his cultivation.

He didn't want to waste any more time. He only wished to consume all the meat before the energy that it contained completely faded away.

The only reason why he had risked his life and left the group was that he wished to break through into the eighth level of Qi Refining with the help of the Lurker Lizard meat as soon as possible.

He didn't dare to waste another second.

During the next two days, all he did was wolf down the meat and cultivate around the clock!

As the result, it only took him two days to expand his spiritual sea by another thirty percent.

Since he was no longer marching at a fast pace, and not worrying about anything else for that matter, he used all of his time to cultivate. In this way, his cultivation improved even faster than he had anticipated.

Not only did his cultivation base improve significantly, but as his fleshy body grew stronger, the range of his psychic power reached as far as ninety meters!

He enjoyed the process, and the result of seeing improvement every day. The feeling of himself becoming more powerful every day made him go all out with his heart and soul.

...

On the other hand, in the desert...

Yu Tong of the Blood Sect held a dark-red compass in her hand. She bit her fingertip and dripped a drop of fresh blood onto its surface, whereupon it turned into countless thin strands of blood which swam about in the compass, as if they were alive.

Then, a misty blood aura was released from the compass, making it look more mysterious than ever.

Soon after, the thin strands of roaming blood lines gradually permeated the compass, disappearing one after another.

“Appear!” exclaimed Yu Tong.

Instantly, tiny, blood-colored lights emerged from the compass, flickering and wiggling slowly.

Mo Xi of the Ghost Sect, as well as everyone else, began to slowly edge closer. “The Blood Searching Compass of the Blood sect really is magical and true to its name!” Mo Xi said with sincere admiration.

He knew that each and every blood-colored light on the compass represented the fluctuations of Qi and blood, symbolizing living beings.

A large number of blood-colored lights gathered in one spot, and moving unceasingly, meant that a group of people were traveling together.

Eyes fixed his on the compass, Du Kun said, “Nineteen blood-colored lights represent nineteen people. If I’m correct, those are the trial takers from the Spiritual Treasure sect and the Cloudsoaring sect.”

“Yee?!” He reached out his hand, pointing at a solitary blood-colored dot on the compass. “How come there’s one person here?”

Mo Xi looked over with rapt attention, and found that there was quite a distance between that light and the other nineteen lights. Obviously, they weren’t in the same place.

The group of lights were on the move, while the single light didn’t move at all and instead remained at its original spot.

“I guess this person... has been kicked out of the team.” Du Kun



from the Ghost Sect giggled. “That guy must be a trouble maker. They knew perfectly well that we would chase after him, yet kicked him out anyways. Clearly, they didn’t care if he died. Only a guy who displeases everyone would be removed from the group in a situation like this. Pathetic.”

At this time, Yu Tong put the Blood Searching Compass away, and pointed in a direction. “That way. Fifteen kilometers from here, there’s someone all alone.”

Brow furrowed, Mo Xi turned to Du Kun, “Our main target is the group of disciples from the Cloudsoaring sect and Spiritual Treasure sect. It isn’t worth it for all of us to change direction just for one person. Whoever this guy is who got kicked out of the group, it can’t possibly be Jiang Lingzhu or An Ying. With your strength, you can kill whoever it is, as long as it’s not one of those two.”

Du Kun understood immediately. “I’ll go kill him.”

“Okay, regroup with us once you get rid of him,” said Mo Xi. “Don’t take too long.”

“Got it.”

Du Kun followed the direction that Yu Tong had indicated, and left the group.

Mo Xi called out, “Move faster guys, we have to catch up to them

and kill them in the desert. We can't allow them to get into the volcano area."

"Let's go!"

...

Nie Tian sat there cross-legged, surrounded by numerous sand dunes, the five fingers of his right hand spread out.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Countless strands of spiritual light emanated from his fingertips.

They followed the fluctuations of his mind and coiled around his fingers like slender, electrical snakes, weaving back and forth between the gaps of his fingers.

"The seventh level," whispered Nie Tian. "Spiritual power breakaway."

At this time, he had just consumed a huge amount of dried spirit beast meat. The meat was still being digested, and the energy within hadn't dispersed yet.

Before practicing the Qi Refining Incantation, he attempted to practice the spiritual power breakaway of the seventh level of Qi Refining.

To his surprise, it went perfectly well. When his spiritual power flowed along his meridians into his fingers, strands of spiritual power wasn't met with any kind of obstacle, and effortlessly broke away from his fingertips.

Soon, he made another shocking discovery: the embodiments of spiritual power actually left his fingertips in form of strands of bright light, and he could sense them and even control them with his psychic power!

Looking at the strands of spiritual light dancing around at his command, Nie Tian had nothing but joy on his face.

Faintly, he had a feeling that the stronger his psychic power, the more accurately he would be able to sense and control his spiritual power.

Plus, he was born with his psychic power stronger than others. While he strengthened his fleshy body, his psychic power had also improved by the day.

Now, his psychic awareness was already able to cover a radius of one hundred meters!

This meant his psychic power was skyrocketing, far surpassing other Qi warriors at his cultivation stage.

With a stronger psychic power, he would have a better command

of his spiritual power. When strands of his spiritual power left his body, he would be able to command them to vary their form, exactly according to his will.

“Awesome!” he declared, laughing, his spirits high.

As of this moment, the spirit beast meat he had wolfed down moments ago had already been digested, and gradually started to generate power.

Nie Tian quickly calmed his joyful heart, and without any hesitation, started to practice the Qi Refining Incantation.

He believed that if he managed to consume the hundreds of kilograms of meat before the energy it contained degraded significantly, he would soon be able to break through into the eighth level of Qi Refining.

THUMP! THUMP!

The clear sound of footsteps suddenly rang out, which grew louder and louder.

Nie Tian only desired to practice cultivation when he heard the sound. His expression suddenly flickered, and without much thinking, he once again released his psychic awareness to sense the anomalies in the vicinity.

He knew that the Cloudsoaring sect and the Spiritual Treasure

sect's disciples must be rushing towards the volcano area at maximum speed. They couldn't be here.

What were approaching him must be either disciples of the Ghost sect or the Blood sect, or spirit beasts that roamed the desert.

The reason he released his psychic awareness was actually to determine the number of them, so that he could decide whether to flee at the first possible moment.

“There's only one!”

In the next moment, he retracted his psychic awareness, and gradually rose to his feet in an unhurried manner.

THUMP! THUMP!

The sound of footsteps grew even louder. It seemed that the man wasn't worried at all that Nie Tian might flee. Instead, he was trying to scare him with his imposing manner.

Nie Tian had a calm expression on his face. After he was sure that there was only one in the vicinity, not only did he stop worrying, he actually became quite excited.

Moments later, Du Kun appeared on top of a sand dune.

“Oh, it's you!” he said, sounding a bit disappointed. “I can't

believe you didn't run!"

As soon as Du Kun showed up, Nie Tian recognized him and grinned. "You again? There's only one of you? What, you expected me to run or something? Where are the rest of your friends? Running to catch up?"

"The others?" Du Kun said, sneering. "Ha! Who do you think you are? You really think our entire group would change plans just to chase after a loser like you, someone who got kicked out of his group?"

"Fine," Nie Tian said, clenching his fist. "Well now that you're here, don't even dream about leaving!"

And that was when Nie Tian attacked.

# Chapter 58: Battle of Psychic Power!

---

“You dare to fight me?”

Du Kun had never felt even the slightest bit of respect for Nie Tian. Seeing Nie Tian dashing toward him in this way, he didn't even bring out a spiritual tool to fight with.

He waited until Nie Tian was about ten meters away, then laughed in a deep voice and stretched out his fingers.

At first, his fingers were the same color the rest of his skin, a seemingly unhealthy, waxy yellow.

But when he extended them, his palms and fingers suddenly turned as black as ink.

At first glance, it almost looked as if he had put on a pair of black gloves, which then sent numerous black aura strands out of his fingertips.

“Go!”

With a swing of his hands, he sent finger-thick beams of black light shooting out. They were like sharp, pitch-black swords, piercing ferociously towards Nie Tian's chest.

From within those black light beams, there also came surges of

intense coldness. When they were about to reach Nie Tian, he even heard the weeping sound of evil ghosts.

“Wail of the Ghost!” shouted Du Kun. Face cold, he took the bracelet of human thumbs off his wrist and clenched his fist around it.

A moment later, strands of black smoke flowed out of the bracelet and rapidly transformed into distorted ghost heads..

Next, the sound of the wailing ghosts grew even louder and more heart-quivering!

The chorus of weeping was like a hail of sharp thorns, piercing into the depths of Nie Tian’s spiritual sea.

A moment later, the beams of light stabbed into Nie Tian’s chest, causing piercing pain to fill his mind.

PUFF! PUFF! PUFF!

Not only was his dashing momentum towards Du Kun stopped, he even staggered backward several steps because of the excruciating pain.

When he finally struggled to a stop, he looked down to discover that he had more than ten bloody holes drilled into chest.



The sight of the fresh blood flowing out from each hole caused him to cry out involuntarily.

After the dust settled, Du Kun looked at Nie Tian, totally stunned.

“You’re still alive?”

All of the five disciples that the Ghost sect had sent into the Green Illusion dimension were Qi warriors at the ninth level of Qi Refining.

Du Kun had reached that level a year ago, and had already slaughtered seven opponents at the same stage as himself.

Those seven people were all at the ninth level of Qi Refining. However, when they were hit by his ten light beams, their bodies had all been pierced, killing them instantly.

Nie Tian, on the other hand, had been sent staggering backward, and was bleeding profusely, but still stood strong and tall.

These abnormalities left Du Kun completely puzzled. He quickly put aside any feelings of contempt towards Nie Tian, and started to examine him all over again.

Looking down at the ten holes in his chest, Nie Tian’s face turned grim, and an intense fighting spirit gradually filled his bright eyes.

“I’m wounded...”

This was the first time that he had ever been truly hurt in battle.

Before, when he fought juniors of the Nie clan, they were forbidden to use spiritual tools, hence he had never sustained a serious injury.

The worst thing that ever happened was that he coughed up several mouthfuls of blood, but nothing more.

However, in this battle with Du Kun, it was only the first exchange, and already he had more than ten bloody holes drilled into his chest.

Were it not for his exceptionally strong physique, Du Kun’s first strike might have already killed him.

At this time, even though he was wounded, and hurting incomparably in the chest, he showed no fear.

On the contrary, he was somewhat excited!

“Yee?!”

Even as he shook out his arms and legs, preparing for his counterattack, he suddenly felt the warm currents in his abdomen

madly converging onto the bloody holes in the front of his chest.

Only at that time did he remember that he had consumed a large amount of spirit beast meat before Du Kun showed up.

Originally, he was going to use the spirit beast meat to continue strengthening his flesh and bones, as well as expanding his spiritual sea.

However, due to the abrupt outburst of battle, he didn't have the chance to calm down and cultivate. At this moment, the spirit beast meat that he had previously consumed started to generate power.

He could sense that the power neither merged into his flesh, nor flowed to his spiritual sea, but rather converged onto the bloody holes in his chest.

When he looked down to check his wound again, he discovered to his surprise that the bleeding had completely ceased!

Moreover, the incomparable pain had also been significantly reduced.

It was as if the bloody holes pierced into him by Du Kun's finger blasts weren't even affecting him at all.

Du Kun had been staring at Nie Tian the whole time. Therefore, he also noticed the incredible anomalies and the astounded

expression on his face.

Brow furrowed and expression even grimmer, Du Kun suddenly recalled what Yu Tong had said earlier.

“This Nie Tian guy... seemed to have injured Yu Tong before.”

Then, he took in a large gulp of air, and blew vigorously at the numerous ghost heads floating above the bone bracelet.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Seven ghost heads seemingly transformed into a stream of black smoke. Letting out ear-piercing shrieks, they suddenly flew towards Nie Tian.

At the same time, Du Kun's stretched-out fingers were once again covered in a black aura.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Ten finger blasts shot out from his fingers, as fast and sharp as an arrow.

This time, their target was Nie Tian's eyes!

WOO! WOO! WOO!

The chorus of the ghosts' wailing cries also rang out loud again.

Nie Tian, who had just calmed himself, and was just getting ready to make his move, was once again inundated by the ghost cries, and illusions began to haunt his mind.

As of this moment, the seven floating and shrieking ghost heads had seemingly transcended the physical world, and suddenly appeared in his mind.

“A psychic power attack!”

Having suffered from the first round of attacks, Nie Tian immediately understood the situation. Squinting, he released his increasingly powerful psychic power.

In his mind, he forged his psychic power into numerous lightning-wreathed blades.

These embodiments of his psychic power followed his command, slashing towards the ghost heads that had inexplicably appeared in his mind.

**BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!**

Completely contrary to what he had expected, the ghost heads in his mind couldn't withstand a single blow, and exploded under the

attack of his blades of psychic power!

“Yes! Psychic power can actually be used in this way!” He laughed out loud.

No longer influenced by Du Kun’s psychic power attack, he had a clear vision of the incoming ten beams of black light, and thus effortlessly avoided them.

The ten finger blasts missed their target, and disappeared soon after passing Nie Tian.

“Yee?!”

After having dodged the finger blasts, he looked over with rapt attention to find that the seven shrieking ghost heads had all disappeared.

“Could it be that those ghost heads I killed with my psychic power blades were actually real?” He was confused.

He had been under the impression that the fight just now only took place in his head, and was a mere illusion.

Moments ago, the seven floating ghost heads had appeared to be quite a distance away.

However, after he mentally slaughtered them with psychic

power, they vanished from the real world as well.

Over the years, he had always practiced cultivation in the Nie clan, and had never been guided by a Qi warrior with profound knowledge.

He had been teaching himself how to comprehend and wield spiritual and psychic power.

Up to now, his application of psychic power was still limited to sensing lives and movements within a one hundred meters radius.

PUFF!

Just as Nie Tian was lost in thought, Du Kun suddenly coughed up a mouthful of blood, as his eyes grew dimmer.

“You! How come you have such strong psychic power?!” Shock stretched across Du Kun’s face.

Ghost sect disciples were experts in the art of psychic power, and every one of them possessed psychic power stronger than disciples of the other sects. The spell Du Kun had cast just now, Wail of the Ghost, was one of the Ghost sect’s secret psychic magics. It was so powerful and deadly that it could exterminate the soul of their opponents!

Only the Ghost sect disciples possessed the ability to use their psychic power to skillfully attack their opponents minds.

And only those who had incomparable determination and resilience would be able to resist such techniques.

From the time he had begun practicing cultivation to now, Du Kun had never come across someone who could repulse his Ghost Weep spell and injure him!

“I don’t know why I have such strong psychic power either,” Nie Tian said indifferently before suddenly charging in Du Kun’s direction.

Actually, he didn’t quite understand what had happened, but could tell that Du Kun had somehow become dispirited. Clearly, something was wrong with him.

Therefore, he wished to seize this perfect opportunity, and kill him when he was in a poor state!

“You’re different!” Du Kun’s expression flickered. “You don’t know how to cast psychic power spells, but your psychic power is unbelievably strong! It was because your psychic power was far stronger than mine that you were able to repulse my Wail of the Ghost and injure me! Nie Tian! I’ll remember you!”

With these words, Du Kun turned around and fled like a swift ghost.



# Chapter 59: Slash!

---

“He ran, just like that?”

Nie Tian stared blankly at Du Kun’s fleeing figure.

He had no idea that, for the Ghost sect disciples, injuries to the soul and mind were far more serious than physical injuries.

They were most skilled at attacking their enemies’ psychic world with their superior psychic power. In that way, they would be able to gain an advantage in battles.

However, if their psychic attack failed, or their opponents possessed stronger psychic power, the rest of their tactics would usually not yield good results.

In this case, Du Kun was already convinced that Nie Tian’s psychic power was far stronger than his.

He failed to seriously wound Nie Tian using a psychic weapon that he was quite adept with, and even suffered major injuries from Nie Tian’s counterattack.

Therefore, he decided to play it safe and quit the fight with Nie Tian. The main thought in his mind was getting away as quickly as possible, and then healing the injuries to his soul.

WHOOSH!

Bent on escaping, Du Kun turned into a constantly shifting shadow, which fled at an extremely high speed.

Nie Tian finally snapped out of his thoughts, and snorted coldly. "You can't get away."

He then flashed into action, chasing after him.

By this point, the pain in his chest was gone, and the ten wounds caused by Du Kun's finger blasts has long since stopped bleeding.

Energy was still being generated from his belly, dispersing and roaming about in his entire body. This allowed him to feel full of energy, as though he would never be tired.

Du Kun, on the other hand, had been unceasingly drawing spiritual power from his spiritual sea, so as to run faster into the desert.

Nie Tian scanned the area with his psychic power, ensuring that whenever Du Kun vanished behind the sand dunes, he was still able to accurately locate him.

Nie Tian's acute sensing ability was even comparable to Yu Tong's Blood Searching Compass, and could detect all signs of life within a one hundred meter radius.

Therefore, Du Kun couldn't possibly lose Nie Tian by simply taking advantage of the terrain and the shielding of the sand dunes.

No matter what skills he used, or how skillfully he used the terrain, Nie Tian was always able to pinpoint his location.

Du Kun used every secret movement art and escaping skill he had learned from the Ghost sect, but they turned out useless, only resulting in greater waste of strength.

After he realized that Nie Tian could always locate him, he grew more and more anxious.

He didn't move in a straight line, but rather, a serpentine motion.

By doing that, he consumed almost twice as much spiritual power as he would have running in a straight line. By the time he discovered that Nie Tian was repeatedly closing in on him, he had already unwittingly consumed sixty percent of his inner spiritual power.

Realizing that all the tricks he used on Nie Tian had failed, he finally stopped resorting to trickery.

He started to dash in a straight line towards Mo Xi and Yu Tong's direction, hoping Nie Tian wasn't fast enough to catch him.

Once again, Nie Tian showed up five meters behind him, mocking him while moving rapidly. “Accept your fate already. I can tell that you’ve consumed too much spiritual power. I can also see in your eyes that you’re lacking psychic power. Does it mean... that your soul is also injured?”

“Ha! With your soul injured, and having overly consumed your spiritual power, you can try to run away, but I’ll tire you to death in the end.

“You might as well stop and have a honorable fight with me.

“At least you’ll die with honor.”

Due to the fact that Nie Tian had consumed a large amount of spirit beast meat, he was full of energy the whole time while he was chasing Du Kun. In fact, the energy he drew upon came almost completely from the spirit beast meat, and not his spiritual sea.

Despite having chased Du Kun for so long, he hadn’t used much of the spiritual power in his spiritual sea.

“My companions from the Ghost sect and the Blood sect are just ahead!” Du Kun said, not even looking back at Nie Tian. “Go on and chase me! You’ll soon realize that you’re seeking death! Wait till I reunite with them; no matter how mysterious your skills are, Yu Tong will refine every last drop of your blood!

“She has already considered you as her target! As long as you appear in front of her, she’ll definitely drain your blood with her blood refining technique, and you’ll become a dry corpse!”

“Oh really?” Nie Tian replied with a firm expression. “I’m guessing they’re currently chasing after the trial takers of the Cloudsoaring sect and Spiritual Treasure sect, whom I parted with quite a few days ago. They should be reaching the edge of the desert by now. I assume your people should have been pursuing them for about two days already. Am I right?”

“You came by yourself, and it probably took you a day to get here, right? They must have been chasing after my people when you split up with them and came after me. So that adds up to a very long distance between them and us.

“From my rough calculations, I can tell that it’ll take at least one day for you to reunite with them.

“In such a long time, you’ll easily use up all of your spiritual power, and I’ll kill you effortlessly after that.”

Nie Tian took his time to give voice to his analysis.

Du Kun was still running with his back towards Nie Tian. However, as soon as he heard Nie Tian’s analysis, his face suddenly turned bleak.

He knew perfectly well that all the things Nie Tian had said were

accurate, and he would indeed need more than one day to catch up with Mo Xi and Yu Tong.

And that would be if his soul hadn't been injured and he was full of spiritual power.

In his current state, he definitely couldn't dash forward over a long period of time. Actually, he desperately needed to rest and stabilize the anomalies of his soul with the Ghost sect's secret magics.

However, he also knew that once he stopped he would face Nie Tian's storm of attacks.

There was no way that Nie Tian would give him even the slightest chance to recover.

Soul injured, spiritual power overly consumed, he no longer had the confidence to win against the inexhaustible Nie Tian.

However, he ignored Nie Tian's taunting. Tight-lipped, he focused only on dashing ahead, not wishing to waste his energy arguing with Nie Tian.

At this time, the closely pursuing Nie Tian also became slightly agitated, because he had noticed that, just like An Ying had said, Du Kun truly had a way with escaping.

Dashing forward at full speed, Du Kun seemed weightless, and

the way he moved was extremely unpredictable and swift.

Nie Tian had already resorted to using his own spiritual power, but still failed to shorten the distance between him and Du Kun. He could only follow far behind him.

The closer they got to the Ghost sect and the Blood sect disciples, the more unsafe he became. The fact that Du Kun was able to pinpoint his location meant that they had an expert or some sort of magical instrument that could detect signs of life.

The truth was that if they could detect that someone was chasing another, they would probably send people to check. In that case, it would be quite dangerous for him.

“No! I can’t waste too much time and energy on this guy. I still need to use the spirit beast meat to break through into the eighth level of Qi Refining as soon as possible!”

Teeth clenched and eyes glittering, Nie Tian pondered how to finish off Du Kun in a short time.

“His soul is injured...

“Clearly, the damage to his soul was inflicted by me... Was it because I killed the seven ghost heads in my mind with the blades forged by my psychic power?

“He was able to morph his psychic power into ghost heads and

invade my brain, so can I use the same measure against him?

“He’s sixty meters away from me, and that’s out of the attack range of my spiritual power. But sixty meters is within my psychic power’s attack range! So, can I use my psychic power to attack him?

“Plus, his soul is already injured!”

Having thought of that, Nie Tian immediately stopped in place.

He squinted and locked his cold gaze on the fleeing Du Kun. A formidable psychic power was instantly unleashed!

His psychic power traveled at a speed far exceeding the fleshly body. It was only a split second before his psychic power arrived by Du Kun!

“Slash!”

Nie Tian let out a bellow.

In his head, his psychic power, which had already locked onto Du Kun, suddenly morphed into countless sharp blades and slashed toward Du Kun.

The moment he shouted “slash”, he had a miraculous feeling that his psychic power blades had pierced into Du Kun’s mind!



BAM!

Eighty meters away, Du Kun's light and ever-shifting body suddenly fell onto the ground with a loud crash as if he had taken a heavy strike.

After hitting ground, Du Kun vomited white foam as his whole body spasmed. The life in his eyes gradually faded away!

Receiving a shockingly good result with one strike, Nie Tian couldn't help but exclaim, "Ahhh?!"

The moment he loosened his concentration, the surging waves of psychic power he had just gathered vanished into thin air.

Du Kun, on the other hand, remained motionless on the ground.

# Chapter 60: A Tremendous Crisis

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Somewhat puzzled, Nie Tian approached Du Kun, hoping to find out what had occurred.

Du Kun was still twitching on the ground, blood streaming out of the corner of his eyes.

“Already lost your fighting power?” Nie Tian murmured as he crouched down. Then, he grabbed Du Kun’s neck with one hand.

CRUNCH!

A disturbing cracking sound echoed from his neck, then his head sagged down as he died instantly.

“It seems Ghost sect disciples are experts of psychic magics. I wonder if he has those kinds of incantation scrolls on him.”

Nie Tian’s eyes glittered as he started to search Du Kun from head to toe, hoping to obtain secret techniques regarding the cultivation of psychic power from him.

Nie Tian knew that Du Kun’s psychic power far surpassed those with a similar cultivation base to his own.

Just now he managed to paralyze Du Kun with a single strike, which helped him to fully realize how amazing psychic power

could be.

Unfortunately, he had been cultivating in the Nie clan his whole life, and never had the chance to obtain knowledge regarding psychic power.

If he looted something from Du Kun that could help him get a better understanding of psychic power, he was sure that his battle prowess would rise to another level.

“Hmm. No information of any kind on him.”

After searching Du Kun from head to toe, Nie Tian failed to find any information regarding incantations for psychic power cultivation. As such, he felt greatly disappointed.

The only things he found were about ten spirit stones, along with a Ghost sect identity medallion, all of which were in the cloth pouch on Du Kun’s waist.

After taking the spirit stones and the medallion, he squinted his eyes, looking in the direction that Du Kun wished to escape in, and fell into deep thought.

He knew perfectly well that Mo Xi, Yu Tong, and the other disciples of the Blood sect and the Ghost sect were currently chasing after An Ying and her alliance at full speed.

He wasn’t sure if An Ying and the others could join forces with

Zheng Bin in the volcano area before Mo Xi and Yu Tong caught up to them.

“I killed this guy and weakened the Ghost sect all by myself. I suppose this also counts as helping them. With me gone, they have 19 people on their end, so they should be able to just barely contend against the people from Ghost sect and Blood sect.

“Once they meet with Zheng Bin of the Mystic Mist sect, the Ghost sect and Blood sect’s mission in the Green Illusion dimension will fail.

“I’ve come to the Green Illusion dimension to train and build up myself, so I’d better consume the spirit beast meat as soon as possible. Otherwise, it would be a huge waste.

“The only thing that I can do to help them is to stay here and cultivate, hoping that after the Ghost sect and the Blood sect realize that this guy has died, they will assign others to come and kill me.”

With these thoughts, he sat down next to Du Kun’s body, eyes closed, and started cultivating.

...

In the depths of the desert.

The Blood sect’s Yu Tong once again took out her Blood

Searching Compass to detect An Ying and her companions' location.

Mo Xi stared down at the dots of blood-colored light on the compass, and grinned.

“They’re right ahead of us!”

“We’ll be able to catch up to them in a day. Then we’ll kill them all before they leave the desert!”

Glancing at a corner of the compass, he found a single blob of blood-colored light, and said, “There’s only one blob of light left. Du Kun must have succeeded already.”

“Something’s wrong,” Yu Tong said with furrowed brow. She shook her head. “That that blob of light isn’t moving. If Du Kun really succeeded, he definitely wouldn’t stay in one place.”

Upon hearing her words, not only Mo Xi, but other Blood sect and Ghost sect disciples were also seized with shock.

“What?! Are you saying... Du Kun is the one who’s dead?” Mo Xi’s face turned grim.

Yu Tong said expressionlessly, “I don’t want to believe Du Kun would fail either, but the facts are in front of us.”

After a moment of silence, Mo Xi suddenly commanded, “Song Heng! Head over there and take a look!”

“No,” Yu Tong said calmly. “Considering that Du Kun was the one who died, Song Heng going by himself wouldn’t necessarily be safe. However, if we send more people over, we’ll be short handed. Even if we managed to catch up to those from the Spiritual Treasure sect and Cloudsoaring sect, we wouldn’t be able to guarantee a victory.”

Mo Xi shouted, “But he killed Du Kun! He has to die!”

“I understand.” Yu Tong nodded. “I’m saying that we have to make priorities. We should finish off those 19 people first. After we do, returning to kill him will be a piece of cake.”

“Since he remains in the desert, as long as we have the Blood Searching Compass, there’s no way that he can escape.”

Mo Xi pondered over it for awhile, and realized that her decision was a wise one. “Alright then. I’ll let him live for a few more days!”

...

After killing Du Kun, Nie Tian had always been meticulous while using the spirit beast meat to cultivate.

Every once in awhile, he would release his psychic awareness to detect the fluctuations of life in the surrounding area, and prepare

himself for battles that could take place at any time, in case more people from the Ghost sect and Blood sect might come for him.

However, during the following two days, not a single enemy showed up.

In the meantime, he had consumed a large proportion of the Lurker Lizard meat, leaving behind only about a quarter of the original amount.

His spiritual sea had also expanded by as much as eighty percent. Given three more days, he believed he would be able to break through into the eighth level of Qi Refining stage!

“The eighth level!”

The thought of him being able to leap into the eighth level from the sixth level made him suddenly seethe with excitement.

As long as he could reach the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of fifteen, he would be accepted by the Cloudsoaring sect and become their disciple!

Once he became a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect, his grandfather's status in the Nie clan would also rise accordingly.

Perhaps all the humiliations and injustice that his aunt had endured through all the years could finally be met with justice.

“I promised my aunt that I’ll become a Cloudsoaring sect’s disciple! When I get out of the Green Illusion dimension, it won’t be long before I honor my word!”

He munched even harder on the spirit beast meat before starting another round of refinement and upgrading of his spiritual sea.

Time gradually passed by...

Three days went by in the blink of an eye, and all of the remaining spirit beast meat was gone.

Sitting with his eyes closed, Nie Tian was practicing Qi Refining Incantation, channeling the energy to reform the spiritual sea in his dantian.

Although focused on his cultivation, he continued to maintain focus on the surrounding area. He suddenly sensed that the stuffy heat of the desert seemed to have faded away.

His hair seemed to quietly stand up on end due to the change in the temperature.

Having sensed the anomaly, he ceased his work with his spiritual sea, and released his psychic awareness, extending it out in every direction.



His first thought was that someone from the Ghost sect or the Blood sect had come for him.

Waves of extremely vigorous life fluctuations suddenly reflected into his soul. Expression flickering, he looked off in the direction of the disturbance.

Soon, his psychic awareness detected a powerful life form, something that clearly didn't belong to a human being!

“Spirit beast! A second grade spirit beast just like the Lurker Lizard!”

He sprung to his feet, eyes locked on the direction that had been determined by his psychic power detection, ready for a fierce battle.

He was right!

About ten seconds later, a giant figure appeared from the direction that he had been staring in.

“The Frost Python!” Nie Tian stood aghast.

Previously, when his group went through the enormous trouble to search for it in the glacier area, it seemed to have disappeared into thin air. Now, however, it had actually appeared in the desert!

The Frost Python was the most powerful spirit beast in the entire Green Illusion dimension, moreover it seemed to possess impressive intelligence.

Upon seeing the Lurker Lizard getting injured, the Frost Python immediately fled the glacier area.

It seemed to know that everyone was hunting for it. Hence, it had concealed itself ever since, not leaving a single trace of its whereabouts.

Unlike the Lurker Lizard, it hadn't been injured by An Ying or Zheng Rui. It had only consumed a little proportion of its strength, which should have long since recovered after such a long time.

This meant the Frost Python that Nie Tian was facing now was at its peak!

# Chapter 61: Ancient Underground Palace

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The Frost Python slowly glided towards Nie Tian.

It examined him silently, yet didn't try to kill him.

Nie Tian's attention was more concentrated than ever as he stared wide-eyed at the Frost Python. He secretly circulated his spiritual power, preparing to react at any moment.

"Scales...!" Nie Tian was shocked inwardly.

As it approached, he noticed that the more than ten-meter-long silver python had actually grown silver, crystalline scales!

Days before, when he was still traveling with Pan Tao and others in the glacier area, searching for the Frost Python, he learned many of its secrets from Pan Tao.

According to Pan Tao, in the second grade, Frost Python should be silver in color from head to tail, but completely lacking in scales.

However, once scales appeared on the Frost Python, it would mean that it had successfully broken through into the third grade.

Third grade spirit beasts could be as powerful as Qi warriors with a Heaven stage cultivation base, their formidable power increasing

by several times!

The Frost Python in front of Nie Tian's eyes had already grown dozens of ice-like scales after hiding for a long time, which meant after a period of hiding, it had already become a third grade spirit beast!

If it was still in the second grade, he might still have the audacity to fight it, and perhaps, he could kill it with the rage punch.

However, now that the Frost Python had stepped into the third grade, he knew that he wouldn't even have a ten percent chance to win, even with the rage punch.

With that fist strike, he could only kill Qi warriors of the Lesser Heaven stage, whose strength was far inferior to third grade spirit beasts.

No matter what, it would be impossible for him to kill this third grade Frost Python. Engaging in battle with it meant death!

After having a clear understanding of the situation, Nie Tian didn't dare to hesitate any more, and started fleeing at the fastest speed possible.

**SHEW!**

He blurred into action, dashing toward the direction of the Ghost sect and the Blood sect people, without wasting one second.

He knew perfectly well that he couldn't possibly contend against the Frost Python alone.

The only possible way to kill the Frost Python would be with the help of the Cloudsoaring sect, the Spiritual Treasure sect, and maybe even the Ghost sect and the Blood sect.

HISSS! HISSS!

The sound of the Frost Python slithering across the sand could be heard from behind him. But then, after only about ten seconds, it surpassed him, and was silently waiting for him on the sand dune in front of him.

After reaching the third grade, it was faster than him by a great margin!

Seeing that the Frost Python had surpassed him and was now waiting there in front of him, staring at him oddly, Nie Tian's scalp began tingling so hard it felt like his head might explode.

Without any further thought, he immediately turned around and dashed in the opposite direction.

SSS! SSS!

After about ten seconds, the Frost Python surpassed him again,

and yet again came to a stop in front of him.

Flabbergasted by what was happening, Nie Tian once again turned around, madly drawing power from his spiritual sea and fusing it with the energy roaming within his body to run at full speed.

However, the Frost Python was still much faster than him!

No matter how hard he ran, the Frost Python could always easily surpass him, and wait up ahead for him.

After a few more tries, Nie Tian was still unable to get rid of it, and thus gave up.

He finally understood that there was no way that he could escape from the third grade Frost Python.

“Bring it on!”

After giving up on running, Nie Tian assumed a battling posture, since he had no other option.

To his surprise, despite his battle posture, the Frost Python didn't make a single move.

Its eyes flickered with intelligence, as though it were contemplating some plan it had hatched.

Since it didn't move, Nie Tian also didn't dare to move. All he could do was stare at it with rapt attention, in case it launched an attack.

After a long moment, the Frost Python's eyes suddenly flickered, and it turned and slithered off toward the depths of the desert.

Before long, it stopped and turned around to look at Nie Tian, seemingly waiting for something...

Nie Tian was full of confusion.

HISS! HISS!

The Frost Python kept flickering its forked tongue and making hissing sounds, while simultaneously looking back.

Staring at it, puzzled, Nie Tian suddenly read from its eyes what it wanted to express: follow me.

Nie Tian was stunned.

The Frost Python actually wanted him to follow it?

HISS! HISS!

The Frost Python kept making hissing sounds, which were now filled with impatience, as if it was urging him to get moving.

It took a moment for Nie Tian to react, and followed obediently with a wry smile.

He wasn't sure what trick it was playing, but he knew for sure that if he engaged in battle with it, he would definitely be the one to die.

Having reached the third grade, the Frost Python was definitely not something he could handle. He had already had a clear understanding of that from the way that the Frost Python had easily outrun him.

If he were to run away, he wouldn't be successful. If he were to fight, he would die beyond a shadow of a doubt.

In this situation, behaving obediently was definitely the smartest choice.

Even though he was full of reluctance, in order to survive, he could only follow the Frost Python into the depths of the desert.

Time flew by... it felt as if he had already followed the Frost Python for quite a long time.

During this time, he knew that the Frost Python had been intentionally moving at a speed that he was able to keep up with.



Whenever he stopped or had reservations, the Frost Python would always look back at him.

Under its frightening gaze, he would usually force a smile and continue to move forward, abandoning any plans to escape.

With the Frost Python in the front and Nie Tian behind it, they marched forward silently at a fast pace.

After an unknown period of time, the Frost Python suddenly halted, so Nie Tian also stopped.

He adjusted his breathing, and stealthily observed the surrounding area, wishing to know why the Frost Python had stopped here.

It was a tiny oasis with a small lake, which was filled with mysteriously green-colored water that emitted a fishy smell.

On the perimeter of the oasis, there grew a large number of short plants which were sparsely spread, and from the look of them, they were on the verge of dying.

Soon after the Frost Python stopped, it slowly swam to the center of the lake.

Suddenly, it raised its tail high into the air, and drops of blood

seemed to be forced out of the end of its tail.

PLOP! PLOP! PLOP! PLOP!

As soon as its blood dripped into the lake, the pungent, fishy lake water started to ripple.

A misty, green aura then rose above the surface of the lake, which looked quite frightening.

PUFF!

The raised tail pierced violently down towards the bottom of the lake like a sharp awl.

Observing with rapt attention, Nie Tian discovered that the python's tail had pierced through the ground at the center of the lake, and kept going downwards.

Its ten-meter-long body followed its ground-piercing tail, and sunk smoothly into the earth.

When it only had its giant head above the water, it looked over toward Nie Tian, eyes conveying the message same as before: Follow me!

Nie Tian's expression flickered, intending to escape.

However, it seemed that the Frost Python could read his mind as it sprang its mostly submerged body violently out of the earth.

Then, at the bottom of the lake, a giant tunnel leading downwards appeared as the python retracted its body. However, for some reason, the water didn't flow into it.

It moved aside, giving Nie Tian a clearer look at the tunnel, and indicating with its gaze that it wished for him to enter.

Realizing that his intentions had been discovered, Nie Tian smiled wryly and nodded before entering the lake, swimming slowly to the center.

When he reached the center of the lake, he discovered that the water level only reached his chest. He heaved a sigh, and looked at the tunnel leading downwards, before closing his eyes to jump in.

It felt like he was sliding towards the center of the earth, and along the way down, everything was filled with a pungent, fishy smell.

BAAAAAM!

After a long while, he fell heavily into a pool of water.

He quickly opened his eyes.

There was a enormous stone palace in the deep underground region of the desert!

In the middle of the stone palace, there stood numerous giant stone statues of spirit beasts.

Apart from the statues, there were also numerous stone columns, which had life-like stone dragons wrapped around them!

He was in a corner of the stone palace floating inside a crescent-moon-shaped well, observing the ancient stone palace from the mouth of the well.

WHOOSH!

At this very moment, the gigantic Frost Python suddenly fell from the heavens.

He immediately looked up.

He saw a big stone tunnel mouth at the top of the stone palace which seemed to be the link between this place and the lake above it.

When the Frost Python fell, it wiggled in midair and avoided landing on Nie Tian, instead landing in the empty space in the middle of the stone palace.

After hitting ground, the Frost Python took a look at one of the stone columns, and then looked over towards Nie Tian, giving orders with its eyes again.

Following the Frost Python's gaze, Nie Tian also looked over towards the stone column, and immediately noticed that there was a splendid flame dragon coiled around it.

## Chapter 62: Drastic Turn of Events

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Nie Tian's eyes flickered when saw the Flame Dragon; he had already guessed to some extent the reason why the Frost Python didn't kill him.

His guess was that there was a hint of the Flame Dragon's aura on him.

Perhaps, his animal bone was originally from a Flame Dragon...

Even though he didn't bring it into the Green Illusion dimension, he had probed the wonders of the dragon bone with his psychic awareness on more than a few occasions. Moreover, his soul had entered the drop of blood inside the bone a few times, traveling into an unknown blazing world.

He had studied it every day in an attempt to further understand its wonders, which perhaps caused him to absorb some of the Flame Dragon's aura.

Nie Tian was also convinced that the reason he possessed such strong psychic power was because of him constantly probing the dragon bone and sending his soul into that mysterious blazing world.

Several days ago, when he feared that the Ghost sect or the Blood sect might send people over again to kill him, he constantly extended his psychic awareness to detect any movement in the surrounding area.

It was very likely that the Frost Python had detected the aura of Flame Dragon in the psychic power that he had released to examine the vicinity.

Having a rough idea of the Frost Python's intentions, Nie Tian climbed out of the crescent-moon-shaped well, and walked towards the central area of this immeasurably wide stone palace.

He soon arrived in the front of a stone column that had a Flame Dragon coiled around it. He examined it closely, before turning around and checking the other nearby columns.

One thing that was immediately noticeable was that every single one of the twelve stone columns had a different dragon coiled around it.

Six of them were blazing Flame Dragons.

The other six stone columns featured life-like dragons whose silver scales were identical to the type sported by the Frost Python.

“Frost Dragons?”

Rubbing his chin, Nie Tian's mind drifted as he pondered what Pan Tao had told him earlier.

According to Pan Tao, the Frost Python was an ancient species,

and it was possible that some of them carried the bloodline of ancient Frost Dragons.

As long as a Frost Python possessed the blood of ancient Frost Dragons, no matter how faint, there would be a possibility that the Frost Python could awaken its bloodline and eventually turn into a Frost Dragon.

According to the legends, Frost Dragons were one of the most formidable types of giant dragons in the ancient era, similar to Flame Dragons.

“I have a Flame Dragon’s aura on me, and this Frost Python, on the other hand, probably has a Frost Dragon’s bloodline within. Furthermore, it must have awakened its bloodline when it reached the third grade.

“It must have brought me here to help it with something, presumably by means of the Flame Dragon’s aura.

“Otherwise, it would have killed me long ago, instead of wasting so much energy to bring me here.”

Pondering the situation, Nie Tian continued to study his surroundings in search of an answer.

All of a sudden, he noticed that there was a prismatic altar in the middle of the twelve stone columns.



The altar was made out of dark-brown stones that were piled up together. Numerous grooves could be seen on the altar, each of which was filled with sparkling, translucent dragon bones.

The dragon bones emanated rays of bright light, illuminating the central area of the dim stone palace.

Obviously, those dragon bones were completely different from the ones Nie Tian had seen in the past.

He knew very well that only the bones of high level spirit beasts would be translucent like jade and unceasingly emanate bright light, which was due to the abundant energy they carried.

Dragon bones that could emanate light must contain surging waves of energy within, and were thus extremely useful.

The numerous grooves on the altar were aligned in a particular way, with the dragon bones inside radiating light of various colors.

Light implied energy.

“Twelve stone columns, an altar in the middle, and dragon bones brimming with energy...

“This is an inter-spacial teleportation portal!”

Nie Tian had a sudden epiphany: this prismatic altar was actually

an inter-spacial teleportation portal.

The twelve stone columns carved with Frost and Flame Dragons, the altar, and the dragon bones brimming with energy, were all part of the inter-spacial teleportation portal!

In the next moment, he guessed the Frost Python's intent: to use this inter-spacial teleportation portal to get out of the Green Illusion dimension!

“Yes, that must be it. All the powerful spirit beasts in the Green Illusion dimension were wiped out by the four sects. The spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth here is also gradually drying up. All of these make this place no longer suitable for any living beings to practice cultivation for long periods of time.

“The Frost Python probably also realized that the only reason why it's still alive is that the four sects deliberately spared its life.

“Lingering on in the Green Illusion dimension, not only will it be impossible for it to continue to evolve, but there is also a possibility that it will be killed by the trial takers of the four sects. This is simply a dead end for it.

“Fully aware that staying in the Green Illusion dimension means death, the Frost Python must wish to leave.

“And this inter-spacial teleportation portal hidden beneath the desert is the key. The reason it had led me here must be that it

wants me to activate it.

“Otherwise, it would have escaped from the Green Illusion dimension long ago, and headed off to a new dimension that is more suitable for it to continue evolving.”

A series of thoughts popped up in Nie Tian’s mind. Following the right direction, he got increasingly closer to the true answer.

HISS! HISS!

At this moment, the Frost Python hissed and shot out rays of ice shards mixed with mist from its mouth.

Six rays of ice shards were shot at the six dragon-coiled stone columns, which instantly froze, becoming as translucent and sparkling as cold jade.

The moment the Frost Dragons on the columns were struck by the ice shards, they all seemed to have been activated.

They began to pulse with a powerful, freezing aura, making Nie Tian, who was standing nearby, cold to the point that his teeth were chattering.

The temperature in the stone palace was plummeting at a frightening speed, making him feel as if he had fallen into an ice cave.

His bones, blood, and even his thoughts seemed to have been affected by the coldness.

In shock, he looked over towards the Frost Python.

It was looking back at him, and in its piercing gaze, he saw nothing but coldness.

From the look of it, if he couldn't come up with a solution, he would be completely frozen and turned into a ice sculpture by the surges of extreme coldness that kept emanating out of the stone columns.

“It's pushing me!”

Nie Tian suddenly understood that the Frost Python was forcing him to release his power in its own way.

The only thing that could resist the frost waves were flames. Without them, he would soon be frozen to death!

He cast a look at the stone column beside him; he knew that only by activating the Flame Dragon on that stone column, causing it to release surging flames from that stone column, would he be able to survive.

As the frost aura in the stone palace grew increasingly denser, he

found that his ability to think even seemed to be compromised.

If he failed to find a solution quickly, he might soon lose the ability to ponder.

He reached out one hand, and thrust it violently towards the stone column.

The psychic awareness, that he had exerted all power to cultivate recently, flowed like a river out of his soul and into the stone column that had a Flame Dragon coiled around it.

The moment his psychic awareness flowed into the stone column, he saw wisps of crimson flames started flashing from within the Flame Dragon on it.

In the next moment, a raging surge of flames exploded from within!

BOOM!

In the blink of an eye, incomparably furious flames were unleashed from within the entire stone column, causing the temperature in the stone palace to rise considerably.

Coiled up by the foot of another stone column not far from him, the Frost Python's eyes shone with the light of incomparable excitement.

Shortly thereafter, however, surges of even more bone-piercing coldness emanated from within the six stone columns that had Frost Dragons coiled around them.

Nie Tian immediately realized that only activating one stone column wouldn't be enough to resist the coldness filling the stone palace.

With no time to think, he sent his psychic awareness charging towards the other five stone columns with Flame Dragons.

His psychic awareness was like a lighter. The moment it made contact with the stone columns, the Flame Dragons on them seemed as if they had come to life.

BOOM! RUUUUUUMMMMBLLLLLE!

With a faint tremble, the stone columns also burst into flames.

As such, there were six ice columns that were emanating cold auras, and six fire columns that were emanating blazing flames.

Two drastically different forces, one cold and the other hot, were clashing inside the stone palace, before suddenly merging and pouring into the altar in the middle.

As of that moment, the translucent and sparkling dragon bones

placed inside its grooves immediately exploded into fragments!

Countless sparks of flame splashed out from within the dragon bones, which instantly converged back onto the altar.

Soon after, a grotesque and variegated light screen took shape on top of the altar, distorting and changing unceasingly, like a mysterious gate.

HISSS! HISSS!

Only until then did the Frost Python finally slide forward and rush towards the colorful light screen.

Arriving in front of the light screen, the obviously intelligent Frost Python took one final glance at Nie Tian before jumping determinedly into the light screen.

BOOM!

The moment it entered, the strange light screen exploded into pieces, forming a sky full of various colors.

After it exploded, the twelve stone columns that had previously been unleashing the power of flame and frost, also became still again.

# Chapter 63: The Eighth Level of Qi Refining!

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The Frost Python left the Green Illusion dimension through the inter-spatial teleportation portal, ending up in parts unknown.

The light screen exploded, sending millions of sparks flying out in all directions, filling up the entire dome. In the briefest of moments, the twelve stone columns ceased to emit frost and flame.

As Nie Tian stood there underneath the stone pillar, he decided that he might as well explore the secrets of the stone palace.

However, he soon realized that the sparks of light floating in the air might still contain considerable energy.

Eyes lit up, he immediately released his psychic power to probe the air, and discovered that the entire stone palace was filled with unprecedentedly rich power.

He then realized that the power was from the high grade dragon bones, the same power which had been used by the inter-spatial teleportation portal.

The Frost Python must have spent countless hours and incredible effort to amass such a large collection of dragon bones. They were the key to its escape.

Now, although all the dragon bones had been shattered, the energy they had contained still lingered in the stone palace, and



was dissipating at a slow speed.

“What a formidable power!”

Nie Tian immediately dismissed the idea of exploring the rest of the stone palace, and sat down cross-legged to practice the Qi Refining Incantation.

His spiritual sea thrummed as it began to madly absorb the ever-fading energy, as if it had transformed into an enormous magnet.

Strands of silver-colored mist, together with sparks of light, started converging onto him from all directions, like a band of moths drawn to a flame.

A moment later he sensed that his spiritual sea was brimming with spiritual power!

There were a total of nine levels in the Qi Refining stage. From the first level to the ninth level, a Qi warrior would only need to unceasingly reform and upgrade their spiritual sea to enter the next level.

However, when a Qi warrior was trying to break through into the Lesser Heaven stage from the ninth level of Qi Refining, merely the accumulation of spiritual power and expansion of their spiritual sea wouldn't be enough.

This was where the bottleneck appeared.

After a period of constant consumption of the Lurker Lizard meat and upgrading of his spiritual sea, Nie Tian was already on the verge of a breakthrough.

If he hadn't run into the Frost Python, he might have been able to enter the eighth level of Qi Refining with a single session of cultivation.

This time, the concentrated energy pouring violently into his spiritual sea pushed him to the brink of his goal: the eighth level of Qi Refining!

Cross-legged, he continued to cultivate with rapt attention.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly trembled slightly.

Then, he opened his eyes, face full of ecstasy as he yelled, "I've done it!"

He had successfully entered the eighth level of Qi Refining!

Instead of springing to his feet, he once again probed the surrounding area with his psychic power, and discovered that the energy inside the stone palace, although having thinned out a bit, was still quite abundant.

He sensed that the energy had only faded by a limited extent.

“This is such a rare opportunity. It’s still hard to say if I will come across another second grade spirit beast in the coming days. Without the help of more second grade spirit beast meat, it won’t be easy for me to rapidly improve in the eighth level of Qi Refining.

“The energy here is from those high grade dragon bones. Plus, it’s quite easy to absorb.

“I need to take this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and expand my spiritual sea as much as I can before the energy completely dissipates into the heaven and earth!”

With these thoughts, he snapped out of the complacency of reaching the eighth level of Qi Refining, and calmed himself once again.

Then he began to practice the Qi Refining Incantation, and started another session of cultivation.

Before he knew it, several days passed...

Sitting in the center of the stone palace, obsessed with the upgrade of his spiritual sea, Nie Tian had completely lost track of time, and had even forgotten about eating and sleeping.

Only when he could no longer refine power from inside the stone palace did he finally stop.

He opened his eyes and discovered that there wasn't even the tiniest bit of energy left in the silent stone palace.

He soon realized that the fading energy inside the stone palace, after a period of dissipation, had already completely disappeared.

Even still, he managed to expand his spiritual sea by thirty percent after entering the eighth level of Qi Refining with another session of cultivation.

As a matter of fact, expanding the spiritual sea by thirty percent in the eighth level required an immense amount of energy.

Were it not for the pure energy in the stone palace, he would probably need to cultivate in the Nie clan for half a year or longer to make such an achievement.

The energy in the stone palace had sped up his cultivation by at least ten times, but possibly even more!

Nie Tian knew that the energy had completely vanished and there would be no point in continuing his cultivation. Therefore, he stood up and started to carefully examine the stone palace.

He circled the place three times, discovering nothing but the inter-spacial teleportation portal.

As he looked closer at the walls of the palace, he found many ancient and eccentric engravings on the walls. Some of them were images of spirit beasts, and others were some kind of writing.

From the look of it, those writings were created by high level spirit beasts after they had gained outstanding intellect and wisdom.

Apparently, they carried deep meaning, but unfortunately, he couldn't read the words and could only let out sighs.

With the dragon bones gone, it appeared that the altar in the middle of the twelve stone columns had lost its value.

After a thorough examination, he failed to discover anything else. However, he was fairly sure that the six stone columns that had been carved with Flame Dragons might continue to be of great help to him.

Even though the Flame Dragons on those stone columns were not the skeletons of real dragons, only stone engravings, he could feel that within those six dragons lay terrifyingly rich flame energy.

Evidently, the dragon bone he possessed was also from a Flame Dragon, thus his demand for flame energy was never-ending.

His dragon bone had absorbed all the energy of the entire Flamecloud gem mine before condensing that one drop of blood.

After the blood was fully condensed, the dragon bone seemed to have mutated. On their way back to Black Cloud City, Nie Tian easily used it to burn the two powerful experts into nothing more than ashes.

Furthermore, soon after he returned to the Nie clan, the dragon bone even ripped open space, and took him to a mysterious land.

That was where he saw numerous wondrous things, and comprehended the rage fist strike.

However, the dragon bone needed a massive amount of flame power to transfer him in and out of the mysterious land.

If he wished to use the dragon bone to rip open the space and enter that mysterious land again, he would need to fill it with more flame power.

The six stone columns with Flame Dragons on them were precisely what could provide that tremendous amount of flame power!

“What a pity! I didn’t bring the dragon bone with me. Otherwise, it might have been able to drain the flame power that lies within the six stone columns.”

Full of regret, Nie Tian made an even more thorough examination of the stone palace, leaving no stone unturned.

After failing to discover anything else, he climbed to the top of the stone column that was the nearest to the mouth of the tunnel. From there he leaped into the tunnel, which was the only connection between the lake and the stone palace.

The tunnel wall was made up of sand from the desert, so when he stabbed his hand into it, he was able to hold on firmly.

Pulling himself up with his hands, he gradually climbed up the tunnel. An hour later, he finally emerged from the hole at the bottom of the lake.

Standing in the middle of the lake, he immediately noticed that the lake surface was shimmering gently with a mysterious light.

Meanwhile, the hole that had been drilled by the Frost Python started to heal, bit by bit.

As soon as he emerged from the water, and looked back towards the center of the lake, he couldn't find any trace of the hole, as if nothing had ever happened.

“The stone palace is right beneath the lake. If I can enter the Green Illusion dimension again in the future, I'll definitely take the dragon bone and drain the flame power in the six stone columns with it.”

Narrowing his eyes, he examined and memorized every single detail of that place, including the surrounding terrain and the

color of the lake water, hoping that the next time he entered the Green Illusion dimension, he would be able to find this location accurately.

“I must have spent a long time down there. I wonder whether An Ying’s group has met up with Zheng Bin’s group yet. The Ghost sect and Blood sect probably caught up with them long ago. I hope they are still alive.”

He had consumed all the spirit beast meat, and refined all the energy in the underground stone palace.

As of this moment, not only had he successfully broken through to the eighth level, but also expanded his spiritual sea by thirty percent. There was not much left to do.

“I can go find those guys and help them kill disciples from the Ghost sect and Blood sect.”

After looking around and getting a hold of his bearings, he headed off towards the direction in which the Frost Python had previously come.

He walked alone in the desert.

About ten hours later, he was starting to get tired. Hence, he stopped and took out a spirit stone from the cloth pouch on his waist to recover some spiritual power.



A moment later, he heard a loud sound. Throwing away the drained spirit stone, he stood up, brow furrowed.

“Hmm? Who might that be?”

He released his psychic awareness.

“There are two of them. One has stronger life fluctuations, while the other seems weaker. Who could they be?” He blurred into action, dashing towards the area where he had sensed the fluctuations of life.

Two gray-garbed men entered his sight. With blood covering their chest areas, they hurried forward, whispering to each other.

“Yuan Feng! Yun Song!”

# Chapter 64: Kill!

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Yuan Feng and Yun Song saw Nie Tian the moment he appeared.

“It’s you?!”

Yun Song was stunned, and for a moment, he thought he was mistaken. After all, Nie Tian had parted with the group for a long time, and they all believed he should have died already.

“What happened?” Nie Tian asked in confusion. “How come you aren’t in the volcanic region with Zheng Bin from the Mystic Mist sect? What are you doing here?”

Upon hearing his words, Yuan Feng’s face dropped instantly.

Yun Song gave a wry smile. “We originally planned to go to the volcano area, but that ship has sailed. We ran into disciples from the Ghost sect and Blood sect right before we got out of the desert. They blocked our way forwards and killed several of us, so we could only split up and run.

“Now, we only want to go to return to the Secret Dimension Gate, sit out this trial, and get out of this hellhole at the first possible moment!”

Nie Tian’s expression flickered. “A lot of you were killed? How many people did the Ghost sect and Blood sect have?”

“Nine. There were just nine of them.” Yun Song’s eyes were brimming with fear. “But that witch Yu Tong broke into the Lesser Heaven stage in the middle of the battle! She cast numerous secret magics of the Blood sect. No one could contend against her! She single-handedly dealt with An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, and my cousin at the same time.

“Then a guy named Mo Xi from the Ghost sect swooped in, taking advantage of the opportunity to kill many of the rest of us. We could only flee.

“It’s over. The trial in the Green Illusion dimension is over! I just hope that people on the outside will realize what the Ghost sect and the Blood sect have done, and get in here as soon as possible.”

Nie Tian was shocked. “Yu Tong had a breakthrough during the battle?”

“Cut the crap!” Yuan Feng snorted coldly, looking at Nie Tian with an unfriendly expression. “Hand over your spirit stones. We need to recover our spiritual power as soon as possible.”

“That’s right!” Yun Song yelled, flaunting his cousin’s power. “Hand them over and we’ll let you live, at least as long as we’re here in the Green Illusion dimension!”

Surprised, Nie Tian subconsciously looked down at the cloth pouch at his waist before saying with a strange smile, “We’re in such a dangerous situation, and you still want to rob my spirit stones? Are you sure?”

“Yes, we are!” Yun Song said coldly. “Do you really think we would have let you off if we hadn’t run into the Ghost sect disciples in the glacier area early on? Days ago, when we joined the group with the Spiritual Treasure sect and the Cloudsoaring sect, you dared to made things difficult for us. Do you think you would still be able to leave safe and sound after meeting us here?”

Yuan Feng began to walk toward Nie Tian. “There may be disciples from the Blood sect and Ghost sect chasing after us,” he said. “I don’t want to waste my energy on you. The trial is over. If you’re lucky enough to get out of the Green Illusion dimension alive, I’ll kill you outside.

“For now, I’ll let you live a bit longer. Now, be a good lad and hand over your pouch!”

After a narrow escape from the Blood sect and Ghost sect, Yuan Feng had fled at full speed for quite some time, causing a substantial consumption of his spiritual power.

He also wasn’t sure whether the Blood sect and Ghost sect had sent someone after them.

In that situation, he wasn’t willing to waste his last remaining strength on Nie Tian, so he just asked Nie Tian to hand over his spirit stones.

After all, in his eyes, Nie Tian was just a nobody with a poor cultivation base from the Nie clan.

Considering Yuan Feng's status and power, as long as he wished to, he could kill Nie Tian any time in the future.

Nie Tian took the pouch from his waist and held it in his hand.

Looking over quietly at Yuan Feng for a moment, he said, "According to your words, even if I give you the spirit stones, you'll still kill me after the Green Illusion dimension's trial ends?"

"That's right! You're lucky enough that I'm gonna let you live for a while longer." Yuan Feng didn't even try to conceal his intentions.

Nie Tian nodded, and grinning, dropped the cloth pouch by his feet.

With a glance at the pouch, he took one step back, indicating that Yuan Feng and Yun Song should come and get it.

"You're in luck!"

Without the slightest hesitation, Yun Song leaped to Nie Tian's side, and bent over to fetch the pouch.

At that moment, a strong killing intent emanated from Nie Tian's eyes.

“Watch out!” Yuan Feng called out.

Just as Yun Song reached downwards, beams of light suddenly shot out from Nie Tian’s fingertips.

“I knew you’d do that!” Yun Song snorted, as if he had been prepared for the attack, and immediately straightened up.

Instead of grabbing the pouch, he unleashed his internal flame power, clenching his fist and punching towards the five light beams.

One after another, numerous clusters of flame shot out of his fist, submerging Nie Tian’s light beams.

BANG! BANG!

With a loud clash, the light beams and the flame clusters exploded and vanished together into the air.

After neutralizing Nie Tian’s attack, Yun Song’s face suddenly turned grim. “Spiritual power breakaway. You have actually broken through to the seventh level of Qi Refining!”

Back when he fought Nie Tian in front of the Spiritual Treasure Pavilion, Nie Tian was only at the fourth level.

And that was how long ago?

After their battle in Black Cloud City, he was well aware of Nie Tian's fierce temperament, and the fact that he would never give in.

But after all, he knew that Nie Tian's cultivation base was poor, so even though he knew that Nie Tian would unleash murderous attacks, he wasn't afraid in the slightest.

Completely contrary to what he had expected, Nie Tian had reached the seventh level, and possessed the ability to release his spiritual power out of his body!

If he hadn't been prepared, Nie Tian's five finger blast probably would have doomed him!

Right as he was rejoicing that he was smart enough to have anticipated Nie Tian's attack, Yuan Feng called out to him again, and immediately began to rush over. "Yun Song! Get back here!! He's now at the eighth level!"

"Too late," Nie Tian said with a cold smile, unleashing his formidable psychic power to attack Yun Song.

Having savored the sweet taste of killing Du Kun, he realized that his unusually strong psychic power was a perfect weapon!

From his point of view, he was single-handedly fighting Yun Song and Yuan Feng. If he couldn't use special tactics to finish one

off, once the two of them flanked him, he wouldn't necessarily come out victorious.

Ever since Yuan Feng clearly stated that he would spare no effort to kill him at the first possible moment even if he got out of the Green Illusion dimension alive, he had made up his mind to kill them.

He had to kill both Yuan Feng and Yun Song while in the Green Illusion dimension, otherwise, they would bring him endless trouble in the future!

Furthermore, with the disciples of the Ghost sect and the Blood sect in the picture, he could easily find excuses for the trial takers' deaths: killed by the Ghost sect and Blood sect!

Having figured out an excuse, he brought out his trump card without the slightest scruple.

Facing the unexpected psychic attack, Yun Song felt as if he were being possessed by a demon.

“Ahhhh!!”

Feeling the intolerable stabbing pain in his head, he held his head, wailing in anguish.

Nie Tian took advantage of the opportunity and reached out his hand with the speed of lightning. Clenching Yun Song's neck, he



then tightened his grip.

CRUNCH!

The sound of bone cracking rang out from within Yun Song's neck, and simultaneously, his head drooped down in an unnatural way.

Yuan Feng opened his eyes so wide that they almost bled. "You! You killed him! You actually killed him!!"

Everyone who participated in the Green Illusion dimension trial had to abide by the rules and regulations set by the four sects, which included no killing between trial takers.

Even though Yuan Feng held a grudge against Nie Tian, back when he demanded that An Ying hand him over, he only wished to disable him; he didn't have even the slightest intention of killing him.

He had never expected him to unleash murderous attacks towards Yun Song in the Green Illusion dimension.

After all, if he ever got out of the Green Illusion dimension and revealed this matter to others, Nie Tian would inevitably be executed by the four sects!

"If I don't kill him in the Green Illusion dimension, I probably won't have another chance after returning to Black Cloud City."

Nie Tian's face was cold and grim. "If I see him causing me trouble in Black Cloud City after we get out, I'll regret that decision every day. So, in order to have no regrets in the future, I can only kill him in the Green Illusion dimension."

"You'll be executed by the four sects!" yelled Yuan Feng.

"No, I won't." Nie Tian grinned cruelly. "I've also planned for your death... As long as you're dead, no one will ever know the truth. I'll tell them that you two were killed by the Ghost sect and the Blood sect, and that I had nothing to do with it."

# Chapter 65: The Real and Unreal Yuan Fengs

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After witnessing Yun Song being killed, Yuan Feng, who was in the middle of dashing forward to attack Nie Tian, suddenly stopped in his tracks.

Standing there five meters away from Nie Tian, he probed his true strength with a grim look in his eyes.

However, upon hearing that Nie Tian intended to silence him by killing him, he couldn't suppress his fury.

“You want to kill me, too?” Yuan Feng smiled furiously.

In response to Yuan Feng's question, Nie Tian nodded seriously. When he spoke, it was as if killing Yuan Feng was the most normal thing in the world. “If you leave the Green Illusion dimension alive, won't people know about me killing Yun Song? Well, what's done is done. There's no point in saying anything else. It's either you or me. Of course, I plan to make sure the person who ends up dead is you.”

The moment he finished, Nie Tian once again gathered his psychic power, and his eyes turned as cold as a star on a winter night.

Psychic power could move significantly faster than the fleshly body and spiritual power.

In a split second, his psychic power was forged into countless sharp blades which exploded towards Yuan Feng's mind.

BOOM!

Yuan Feng shook violently; his expression distorted and his eyes filled with shock and fear.

“What formidable psychic power!”

As of this moment, he finally understood how Nie Tian managed to kill Yun Song in a second.

Yun Song was at the seventh level of Qi Refining. Normally, with a cultivation base slightly inferior to Nie Tian, he shouldn't have suffered such a quick loss.

The fact that Nie Tian managed to kill Yun Song with just his second attack defied common sense.

It was exactly because he was skeptical about the way Yun Song had died, that Yuan Feng refrained from acting rashly when he approached Nie Tian.

As a matter of fact, he also feared that Nie Tian might have some sort of secret weapon at his disposal.

Only when Nie Tian's formidable psychic power transformed into sharp blades and suddenly pierced towards his mind, did he finally have an epiphany: Nie Tian possessed unusually extraordinary psychic power!

Yuan Feng let out a cold harrumph, and immediately unleashed a secret magic of the Greyvale sect.

“Soul Reinforcement Incantation!”

When Nie Tian's sharp blade of psychic power reached Yuan Feng's mind, he discovered that Yuan Feng's mind had become like an impregnable fortress.

The numerous sharp blades seemed as if they had slammed onto a piece of solid rock, and were unable to inflict any damage on Yuan Feng's soul.

Seeing that his psychic attack had failed, Nie Tian decisively retracted all of his psychic power.

“The Ghost sect disciples were the most skilled at attacking with psychic power. As a member of the Greyvale sect, I fight with the Ghost sect all the time. Do you really believe that I don't have a way to respond to that?”

After learning how Nie Tian had managed to kill Yuan Feng in an instant, Yuan Feng's heart actually settled down a bit.

Defending his soul with the Soul Reinforcement Incantation, he took his time walking towards Nie Tian.

Increasingly strong waves of spiritual power kept emanating from within his body as he got closer and closer.

Nie Tian's face turned especially grim as he realized that Yuan Feng, who had been viewed by the Greyvale sect as a seeded disciple, was indeed different from Yun Song.

Yun Song was only at the seventh level of Qi Refining, far from enough to be accepted by the Greyvale sect. Furthermore, even if Yun Song was officially accepted by the Greyvale sect, with his cultivation talent, he surely wouldn't be picked as a seeded disciple.

Not being able to enter the Greyvale sect meant that he'd never had the chance to learn certain magical incantations, such as the Soul Reinforcement Incantation. Therefore, it was understandable that Yun Song couldn't withstand a single blow of Nie Tian's psychic power.

However, it suddenly came to him that the fact that he was able to kill the Du Kun from the Ghost sect so effortlessly was because he had been injured from the backlash.

If it weren't for the backlash caused by the death of the seven evil ghosts, Nie Tian's attack wouldn't have been able to penetrate Du Kun's defense, and Du Kun wouldn't have suffered such a tragic defeat.

Once he figured out how to launch another round of attack, Nie Tian realized that he couldn't win every time by simply blasting away with his psychic power.

He adjusted his breathing and tried to calm himself. No longer daring to underestimate Yuan Feng, he secretly prepared for a bloody battle.

“Gray Shadow Incantation!”

Yuan Feng let out a ferocious shout, and two gray shadows suddenly flew out from the thrumming spiritual power in his body.

It seemed that those shadows were the manifestation of his spiritual power, which then swooped toward Nie Tian.

Simultaneously, Yuan Feng, smiling, took a gray banner from his pouch.

Instantly, the banner fluttered in the wind, and at the same time, various twisting and bizarre images appeared on its surface, which appeared to be infused with strong spiritual power.

As soon as he waved the banner in his hands, those two originally vague gray shadows immediately became clearer.

“They’re two Yuan Fengs!”

Nie Tian’s expression flickered as he watched the gray shadows morphing into two Yuan Fengs in front of his eyes.

Moreover, he could clearly sense that the two shadows of Yuan Feng actually emanated fluctuations of spiritual power and life!

Not only did the two shadows have fleshly bodies, but they were also given souls and lives with a wave of the banner. Now it was almost impossible to discern between them and the real Yuan Feng.

“Spiritual tool! He used his spiritual tool!”

Without thinking too much, Nie Tian hurriedly avoided the attacks of the two shadows, declining to engage in a head-on fight with them.

By this point, Yuan Feng had already put his banner away and was dashing towards Nie Tian with a vicious grin on his face.

A moment later, Yuan Feng joined his shadows, and the three of them blurred back and forth until it was impossible to differentiate which one was real.

They all had flesh and blood, were dressed in gray garments, and even had the same expression on their faces. It seemed truly impossible to tell which was the real Yuan Feng.



However, Nie Tian knew perfectly well that the key to winning was determining which of them was the real Yuan Feng!

Once he killed the real Yuan Feng, the other fake ones would instantly disappear, and no longer be able to pose a threat to him.

After joining the two shadows, Yuan Feng shifted positions silently, attacking Nie Tian over and over.

Nie Tian, on the other hand, failed to find the real Yuan Feng with his psychic awareness. Therefore, all he could do was keep dodging, and fight back when he was forced into a corner.

BANG!

He threw a fist strike towards Yuan Feng, hitting him in the chest. However, he felt no sense of counterforce, almost as if he was hitting the air.

He immediately realized that he had struck nothing more than a shadow of Yuan Feng, a shadow created by the Grayvale sect's secret magics.

Just as he was sighing inwardly, and even as his fist sailed through the air, he suddenly experienced an explosion of pain in his back.

He was hit by a punch, and staggered forward from the strong impact.

When he turned around to look, he saw another Yuan Feng bolting toward him, grinning viciously.

He immediately readied his fists to meet the attack.

BANG!

However, right as his fist met Yuan Feng's palm, once again it felt as if he was hitting the air.

Since he received no counterforce, he immediately lost his balance, staggering forward.

At this moment, yet another tremendous force smashed directly into his back.

He immediately coughed up a mouthful of blood.

At the same time, he realized that the moment he turned around earlier, Yuan Feng, who had sneakily attacked him from the back, had already exchanged positions with one of his shadows at the speed of lightning.

Therefore, after turning around, he was always faced by a fake Yuan Feng, while the real Yuan Feng was actually behind him!

After two successful attacks, Yuan Feng and his shadows all backed away to keep a distance from Nie Tian.

This time, the real Yuan Feng stepped closer, shaking his head towards Nie Tian, looking a bit disappointed.

“What a pity! You have such strong psychic power, but no relevant skills, and therefore can’t make full use of it or launch any powerful attacks.

“Also, since you haven’t formally joined the Cloudsoaring sect, it seems that you don’t have any incantations or techniques to fully display your spirit power.

“Worst of all, you don’t even have a proper spiritual tool to work with.

“Even though you possesses extraordinary psychic power and decent spiritual power, all you can do now is to wait for death.

“You can only blame yourself for entering the Green Illusion dimension with an insufficient cultivation base, and that you were unlucky enough to run into me too early.

“If you ended up in the Cloudsoaring sect, cultivated some profound incantations and techniques, and were bestowed with a powerful spiritual tool, you might have become a big pain in my neck.

“Whatever... you have to nothing left to do but die.”

After these words, Yuan Feng no longer spoke, but instead blurred into three figures, swiftly shifting positions.

At this time, Nie Tian could no longer wrap his head around which was which.

# Chapter 66: Like an Unwavering Mountain

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Yuan Feng and his two shadows had Nie Tian surrounded, and were constantly shifting positions, like ghosts.

Unable to identify the real Yuan Feng, Nie Tian stood there unwavering, pondering his next move.

All of a sudden an idea struck him.

It was only the real Yuan Feng who had inflicted damage on him. Thus, the other two, being shadows, could be ignored.

The shadows could never possess power as strong as the real person!

After realizing that, Nie Tian decided that the smartest move was to remain still and wait for an opportunity.

Once again, a Yuan Feng smashed his fist towards Nie Tian's chest. Nie Tian, on the other hand, didn't even blink, completely ignoring that attack.

BANG!

The punch fell heavily on Nie Tian's chest. He felt the spiritual power contained within it, but after a slight wobble, he remained still, as a pained expression flashed across his face.

Compared to the former two strikes, this punch that Nie Tian had received was many times weaker, completely bearable for his robust physique.

“It’s fake!”

After taking the hit, Nie Tian could now easily tell by the difference in the might of the strike that this Yuan Feng was fake.

Squinting and with a calm face, he remained still in his original position, bracing himself for another of Yuan Feng’s attacks.

The second attack came from the right side as Yuan Feng’s fingers latched onto Nie Tian’s shoulder like hooks.

ZZZZZLA!

The clothing covering Nie Tian’s right shoulder was immediately torn into shreds. A moment later scorching pain radiated out from his naked right shoulder.

However, the pain level was bearable.

“This is also a fake one!”

Still calm, he remained as motionless as a statue, waiting to see what was coming next.

BOOM! BANG! BANG!

The two fake Yuan Fengs repeatedly attacked Nie Tian with their fists and claws.

Soon he had endured close to over ten rounds of attacks. The shirt covering his upper body had already been ripped to pieces. Thin wounds criss-crossed his skin.

However, he stood there like an unwavering mountain, his face expressionless.

After hovering around and attacking him for a while, the expressions of the three Yuan Fengs appeared to be increasingly anxious. Other than the criss-crossed wounds, Nie Tian didn't seem to have sustained any major injuries.

Unlike Nie Tian, Yuan Feng had been marching at a fast pace after escaping from the Ghost sect and Blood sect.

In order to lose them, he hadn't dared to stop and rest at all before reaching this point, and thus he never had a chance to replenish his spiritual power.

Moreover, he had long since consumed all of his spirit stones, way back in the glacier area.

Because he had consumed too much energy, and didn't have spirit stones to help recover, when he encountered Nie Tian this time he had only demanded Nie Tian's spirit stones, in order not to waste his strength.

As a matter of fact, Yuan Feng was actually totally exhausted.

If he couldn't finish off Nie Tian in a short time, he wouldn't be able to afford to keep wasting spiritual power on the Gray Shadow Incantation.

Furthermore, he also feared that the Ghost sect and Blood sect might come for them.

Seeing that his shadows were incapable of killing Nie Tian, Yuan Feng could no longer refrain from personally attacking.

After observing for a while, he noticed that Nie Tian had been silently taking blows from his shadows. It was then that Yuan Feng stealthily made his move.

**BANG!**

Yuan Feng's fist strike landed heavily on Nie Tian's chest!

The power in this punch was so explosive that Nie Tian spit out another mouthful of blood.



However, Nie Tian had long since been prepared. Enduring the piercingly acute pain with much difficulty, he suddenly pounced towards the Yuan Feng who had just attacked him, and knocked him to the ground.

“Here you are!”

He completely ignored the frantic attacks of the two fake Yuan Fengs behind him, as he hooked onto Yuan Feng’s neck with both his hands, continuously exerting his power, hoping to crush Yuan Feng’s neck.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Muffled sounds of impact continuously rang out from Nie Tian’s back as the two fake Yuan Fengs did their utmost to strike him.

“DIE! NOW!”

Jaw clenched and eyes full of killing intent, Nie Tian’s hands seemed like a lock, fastening tighter and tighter.

After sensing vigorous fluctuations of spiritual power from Yuan Feng’s neck, he realized that he had already concentrated all of his spiritual power on his neck.

Nie Tian was unable to crush Yuan Feng’s neck bone!

Knowing that he only had one chance to kill him, Nie Tian concentrated his psychic power and shot it ferociously towards Yuan Feng's mind.

“Psychic attack!”

FIZZ! FIZZ!

As his gaze met Yuan Feng's, the explosive impact of their psychic power caused strange sounds to ring out in the air.

Experiencing difficulties in breathing, a sense of terror gradually rose in Yuan Feng's mind, and at the same time, he found it hard to continue using his Soul Reinforcement Incantation.

From such a short distance, Nie Tian poured all of his tremendous mental strength into Yuan Feng's mind, immediately causing him to fall into a bewildered state.

As Yuan Feng was no longer able to concentrate his attention, the spiritual energy he had gathered in his neck suddenly scattered.

CRUNCH!

Finally, the crisp sound of cracking bone rang from within Yuan Feng's neck.

As soon as Nie Tian heard that sound, his nerves instantly

relaxed.

Yuan Feng was dead!

The ceaseless punching and scratching pain on his back also vanished.

Nie Tian rolled off of Yuan Feng's dead body to lie on the ground. As he did, he saw the two shadows of Yuan Feng dissipating like clusters of thick smoke blown away by a gust of wind.

“He's finally dead.”

He couldn't stop panting, as he took his time to calm down and examine himself.

He almost didn't consume any spiritual power while fighting Yun Song, considering he had killed him in almost an instant.

However, the process of killing Yuan Feng had been unexpectedly dangerous.

By this point, his exposed upper body was covered in a bloody network of wounds that had been inflicted by Yuan Feng's shadows.

Those bloody wounds were only flesh deep; they looked frightening, but were not actually serious.

The only serious injuries were caused by the three attacks from the real Yuan Feng, each of which had left him vomiting blood. It seemed as though even his internal organs had been knocked out of their original positions.

Staring at the gray, cloudy sky, he sorted out his train of thoughts and concluded his reflections.

“Yuan Feng, Grayvale sect seed disciple, at the ninth level of Qi Refining... when he found me here, his spiritual power was probably not even half of his peak amount. Even so, he almost killed me!

“However, his previous comments about me held water. I haven’t been admitted into the Cloudsoaring sect and don’t understand how to make full use of my strength. Hence, I’m unable to turn my enormous psychic power into deadly attacks.

“Plus, I don’t understand different kinds of exquisite incantations and techniques, nor do I possess a proper spiritual tool. I’m at too much of a disadvantage when fighting.

“After I get out of the Green Illusion dimension, I’ve got to quickly enter the ninth level of Qi Refining, so that I’ll be able to learn profound incantations and techniques, and obtain a spiritual tool of a higher grade.”

...

After a long while, when the pain was mostly gone, he got up in an anguished and slow manner, and went over to search the corpses of Yuan Feng and Yun Song.

He didn't find a single spirit stone on Yuan Feng and Yun Song. Yun Song was especially shabby; he didn't have a single item in his possession at all.

Nie Tian found and took the peculiar banner from Yuan Feng. Apart from that, there was also a map of the Green Illusion dimension, which must have been drawn up by someone from the Grayvale sect, in order to facilitate Yuan Feng's search for the second grade spirit beasts.

He didn't know how to make use of the banner, so it wasn't of much help to him for the moment, but that map of the Green Illusion dimension, on the other hand, was extremely helpful.

After storing the banner and map in his pouch, he took out two spirit stones from it, and started to absorb their energy to recover.

Before long, he had fully recovered his spiritual power. However, his injuries still needed time to heal.

It was at this point that an icy voice belonging to a woman caught Nie Tian completely off guard. "Killing your own people?! You really are ruthless. Nie Tian, is it? I remember you."

Yu Tong, dressed in bright red clothes, suddenly emerged from behind a tall sand dune like a ghost.

The truth was that she had been following Yuan Feng and Yun Song with the help of the Blood Searching Compass. When they ran into Nie Tian, she was still more than five kilometers away from the three of them.

As she gradually gained on them, and used her Blood Searching Compass to scan the surroundings, she was surprised to find that there was only one bright blob remaining.

She thought it was someone from the Ghost sect who had beat her to their location, and killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song.

However, when she rushed to this place, the person she found was Nie Tian!

As a trial taker of the four sects, he actually killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song, even though he was perfectly aware that the Ghost sect and Blood sect's disciples were also in the Green Illusion dimension.

She didn't know exactly how unforgivable the hatred between them was. However, since Nie Tian was now alone, she believed that it was time for Nie Tian to pay his debt.

She waved her hand violently towards Yuan Feng and Yun Song's bodies. In the next second, blood flew out of them and swirled up

in a hurricane-like motion.

As she continued to cast the spell, the blood soon morphed into two blood shadows.

“Blood Shadows!”

The moment the blood shadows formed, a light flashed across Yu Tong’s eyes, and the blood shadows pounced towards Nie Tian.

# Chapter 67: Giant Shadow in the Void!

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In Yun Song's and Yuan Feng's eyes, Nie Tian was nothing. Therefore, they had underestimated him when they started fighting.

However, Yu Tong was different.

Nie Tian had defeated her once, shortly after she entered the Green Illusion dimension. Hence, she had long since come to view Nie Tian as a worthy opponent, every bit as capable as An Ying and Yuan Feng.

That was especially true now, when she found out that Yuan Feng and Yun Song had both died by his hands. As of this moment, she regarded Nie Tian as the most formidable opponent from the four sects in the Green Illusion dimension!

Therefore, her first move was to cast one of the Blood sect's secret magics: Blood Shadows.

The two blood shadows, formed from the blood of Yuan Feng and Yun Song, sent out ear-piercing screams as they swooped toward him like two sinister demons, emanating an overwhelmingly bloody smell.

Nie Tian gave a cold harrumph and said, "I heard that you've broken through to the Lesser Heaven stage, you evil witch. Is that true?"



As he spoke, he secretly released his psychic awareness to examine the two blood shadows.

He could only sense strong Qi and blood, but he didn't find any soul fluctuations. This meant that the two blood shadows had no independent wills, and were pure manifestations of Qi and blood.

As the blood shadows attacked, he swung his arm and punched out toward them with full force.

BANG BANG!

With two loud booms, the blood shadows were reduced to a bloody rain, which fell down onto the sand below. However, Yu Tong's secret blood magic summoned them back, and they reformed again!

WHOOSH!

Two new blood shadows rose up into the air and then dashed towards him again.

However, after the process of being destroyed and reforming, the Qi and blood in the shadows were obviously weaker than before.

Similarly, when they dashed over, their speed was considerably reduced.

BANG BANG!

Grinning, Nie Tian swung his arm, shattering the two blood shadows in quick succession.

After exploding, the blood shadows reformed, and dashed towards him yet again. The process repeated over and over.

However, every time they exploded, the power contained in them would significantly decay.

Despite that, the coquettish Yu Tong remained in place, cold eyes glittering with devilish, bloody light as she continued to form the blood shadows.

Soon, Nie Tian realized that Yu Tong only needed to consume a slight amount of power to manipulate the blood shadows, whereas he was expending significantly more power to shatter them.

Yu Tong's plan was obvious: she wanted to wear him out with the blood of Yuan Feng and Yun Song, forcing him to consume some of his spiritual power before the actual fight began.

When the shattered blood drops once again converged into two blood shadows, Nie Tian finally stopped fighting them.

Instead, he dashed towards Yu Tong!

“Forbidden Blood Technique – Reverse Blood Flow!”

Splendid, gorgeous, blood-colored light suddenly appeared in Yu Tong’s dark-red pupils, as strong fluctuations of Qi and blood started to ripple outwards with her as the center.

Nie Tian, who was madly dashing towards her, suddenly felt something like a powerful shockwave slam into his strong and well built body.

At this very moment, Yu Tong, who hadn’t moved a bit since the battle started, suddenly turned into a ray of swift and fierce bloody light.

The next moment, Nie Tian saw streams of red bloody light surging towards him one by one, as though they were numerous streams of blood floating in mid air.

A moment later, he was besieged within a world of blood-colored light, and Yu Tong could no longer be seen.

Stream after stream of floating blood rivers twisted in the air and grew longer and longer, looking devilish and yet simultaneously beautiful.

Surrounded by the countless blood streams, Nie Tian, with a grim face, tried with great difficulty to suppress the unusual movements of the blood within himself.

He could keenly sense his blood being affected, as if it yearned to fly out of his body, as though it wished to join the surrounding rivers of blood.

“The Blood sect’s secret magic is truly worthy of its fame!” Nie Tian was secretly shocked.

He had a feeling that the reason Yu Tong had been avoiding fighting him head on was that she feared his rage fist strike.

Last time the two of them fought, he had burst seven of Yu Tong’s blood shadows with a single blow, and had even injured her.

In Yu Tong’s eyes, the might of that fist strike was far beyond ordinary. Even though she had entered the Lesser Heaven stage, she still didn’t wish for Nie Tian to use that raging fist against her.

“I won’t be able to defeat her with my raging fist if I can’t locate her. Meanwhile, the blood in me is getting increasingly violent and aggressive... soon, I’m going to lose control of it.”

Nie Tian could only desperately restrain the unusual movements of his blood. When his psychic power was unable to penetrate the barrier created by the blood streams and lock onto Yu Tong, he started to feel somewhat anxious.

PHEW! PHEW!

At that time, the two blood shadows which he had repeatedly shattered, suddenly appeared from within the streams of blood.

Logically, they had been shattered many times and the power in their Qi and blood should be next to none, so it was unlikely that they could hurt him.

This time, however, they were emanating terrifying Qi and blood for unknown reasons.

As he looked over with rapt attention, the numerous blood streams appeared to be merging into those shadows.

The blood shadows were originally the same size as normal humans, but under his gaze, they expanded rapidly, and soon became two gigantic blood demons!

Waves of unparalleled power emitted from the two giant blood demons, causing Nie Tian's heart to tighten with shock.

All of a sudden, one of them reached out its giant, blood-colored arm, and attempted to grab Nie Tian.

At the same time, the other one let out a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering roar, pouncing towards Nie Tian while radiating a raging bloody smell.

Yu Tong, who had vanished for some time, was now sitting on the shoulder of the roaring blood demon, her ripe lips so red that it seemed as if they were about to explode with blood!

Now, her pupils had completely taken on the color of the blood, while her body was emitting an extremely dangerous aura.

In her left hand, she was holding an eyeball-sized bead, which kept giving out blinding blood-colored light.

At first glance, Nie Tian realized that the blood bead in Yu Tong's hand was an extraordinary spiritual tool.

“Spiritual tool!”

He could faintly feel that the forming of the blood streams, the merging of them and the giant blood demons, and even the movements of the two giant blood demons, were all affected by that bead.

Yu Tong must have been using that blood bead to cast the Blood sect's secret magics!

“My blood demons have fully formed, I'm afraid you...” Yu Tong licked her bright red lips with an expression as if she had already won. It seemed she was finally confident enough to insult Nie Tian.

However, before she could finish her words, she abruptly

stopped, looking shocked.

The source of her surprise was that Nie Tian's chest suddenly started to echo out with vigorous heartbeats, which were so rapid and loud that she could hear them perfectly clearly from a distance.

Moreover, just as that unbelievably strong heartbeat echoed out from within Nie Tian's body, she suddenly realized that her Forbidden Blood Technique – Reverse Blood Flow was no longer affecting him.

“I'll defeat you with the same method!” Nie Tian bellowed, as he shot straight forward like a sharp arrow.

A surge of unlimited rage suddenly generated in his heart and spread throughout his body, filling every drop of his blood and every pore with burning wrath!

“What is that!?” Yu Tong looked shocked.

At this moment, she vaguely sensed that an invisible figure, huge enough to support the sky, rose up above Nie Tian's head!

She immediately closed her eyes, and unleashed her psychic awareness to discover that Nie Tian's raging anger appeared to have summoned a terrifying giant, which was currently floating above his head!

She also felt that the giant devil, which could only be felt by her soul, was emitting an overwhelming anger that seemed mighty enough to destroy the entire Green Illusion dimension!

In comparison, Yu Tong's two giant blood demons seemed like powerless little worms, not even worth mentioning.

Yu Tong was shocked to her core.

However, she also discovered that the giant figure only existed for a moment before vanishing into thin air. It seemed as if it were from a space far far away, projecting itself into the Green Illusion dimension for only a second.

ROOOOAR!

In the next moment, the blood demon Yu Tong had been riding, together with the other one of its kind, fell to the ground, wailing out of control.

Just as she sensed that something was wrong, Nie Tian's raging fist strike arrived!

"Blood Shield!" Nie Tian shrieked.

Instantly, the wailing blood demons morphed into two streams of blood, swirling up from the ground, and in the next moment, forged into a gigantic blood-colored shield.



BOOM!

The moment Nie Tian's fist made contact with the freshly formed blood shield, his fist actually drilled through the shield, and smashed vigorously onto Yu Tong's ample chest!

POOH!

Coughing up a mouthful of blood, Yu Tong's curvaceous body fell from midair, and landed heavily onto the ground.

# Chapter 68: Blood Cocoon Incantation

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BANG!

Nie Tian landed heavily onto the ground as the burning rage in his eyes faded away.

With a cold face, he glared at Yu Tong, who stood ten meters away from him, while adjusting his breathing and secretly assessing his current condition.

“Oh, no...” After a brief examination, Nie Tian gave a bitter, inward laugh as he realized that the situation was anything but good.

Just as he had expected, the raging fist strike had completely drained the spiritual power in his spiritual sea.

By this point, there was not even a smidgen left for him to use!

Not only that, but the single, full-strength punch that he had unleashed had also consumed a considerable amount of his mental fortitude, leaving him in an extremely terrible mental state.

He stretched his arm, and quickly found that it had become immeasurably heavy. That one punch just now seemed to have exhausted all of his physical strength, which was completely different from the last time he used that style of punching!

Last time he struck with it, only his spiritual energy had been drained, accompanied by minor discomfort, but his psychic power had remained plentiful.

However, after throwing the punch this time, his body seemed to be completely drained of power of all sorts, leaving practically nothing behind.

Now, even the simple act of walking was incomparably difficult for him.

He knew perfectly well that he currently had zero power to engage in battle; in such a poor state, even an ordinary person who didn't understand a thing about cultivation could hurt him right now.

He should have immediately sat down cross-legged to recover his strength with the help of the spirit stones in his pouch.

However, he didn't.

After all, Yu Tong, who had just taken a hit from him, was still standing right there in front of him.

He knew that she must have sustained injuries, but was unsure about her condition. If she were to discover his poor state, as long as she still had some residual strength, she would definitely take the opportunity to kill him.

Yu Tong must not find out about his true condition and that he was actually weaker than ever!

“How does it feel, bitch?” he said, laughing loudly as he stepped toward Yu Tong.

He was absolutely sure that as long as he put on a show of being strong and domineering, Yu Tong wouldn't dare to act rashly!

The ten meter distance between them felt unbelievably vast. When he finally arrived in front of Yu Tong, all he wanted to do was to drop to the ground and rest.

However, he chose not to. Instead, he stood in front of Yu Tong, looking down upon her despite the exhaustion and discomfort which gripped him.

His eyes were filled with a cold, fierce look.

Weak and limp, Yu Tong lay on the ground, her face pale, and the bloody glow fading away from her eyes. The corner of her scarlet lips still had specks of blood on them.

They were the size of grains of rice, like tiny flower petals glistening with dew as they stretched from her lips down her pure white neck. Overall, they made her look completely pitiful and helpless.

Yu Tong clenched her lips and calmly looked Nie Tian in the eye,

not saying a single word.

Lying on the ground, a faint blood-colored aura surrounded her, seemingly protecting her from any further harm.

The truth was that her current state wasn't any better than Nie Tian's.

The huge, mysterious shadow that resulted when Nie Tian abruptly struck her frightened her all the way down into her heart and soul.

Even though she hastily condensed a blood shield, it failed to stop Nie Tian's attack. His fist went through the blood shield, and finally smashed violently onto her chest.

The mighty fist strike inflicted serious damage on her fleshy body. Even her psychic awareness, which enabled her to detect that huge, mysterious shadow, had taken a huge blow and then dispersed.

The blood shield had been forged with her spiritual power and blood. Therefore, when it shattered, her spiritual power and blood also sustained serious injuries. Under such desperate circumstances, she could only cast another of the Blood sect's secret magics: the Blood Cocoon Incantation.

It could not only stabilize the disturbed Qi and blood in her body, enabling her to slowly recover, but it could also protect her to a

certain extent.

However, while using it to recuperate, she was incapable of moving or talking. The only thing she could do was look Nie Tian in the eye.

She did her utmost to appear calm, not revealing a hint of fear, hoping that Nie Tian couldn't see through her act, that he wouldn't discover the urgent sense of concern buried in her heart.

With a cold and fierce gaze, Nie Tian looked down at her and laughed. "How come you're not talking? I heard that you wanted to drain me and refine my blood? Now that I'm here, come and take it."

Waves of fury began to surge out from Yu Tong's eyes, yet she still didn't speak.

Nie Tian's eyebrows furrowed slightly as he secretly sized Yu Tong up. After a moment, his gaze left her face and swept over the rest of her body.

The blood aura that covered her delicate and curvaceous frame seemed like a thin, crimson colored layer, which protected her from any further harm.

However, considering Nie Tian's current condition, even if she didn't have that blood aura to protect her, it would still be almost impossible for him to kill her.

He knew perfectly well that even if he recovered a bit of spiritual power, it would still be impossible for him to break through that layer of protection and kill Yu Tong.

After silently examining her for a while, Nie Tian rubbed his chin in thought, and said, “Is it that you don’t want to talk? Or that you can’t? You haven’t even moved your finger once. Does it mean that... you’re injured so badly that you can’t move at all? Well, if that’s the case, I can do whatever I want with you. Am I right?”

With these words, Nie Tian finally saw fear in Yu Tong’s bright eyes.

“Ha ha!” Relieved, he grinned and slowly crouched down next to her.

Looking her in the eyes, he reached out his right index finger towards her elegant chin.

Panic and indignation filled Yu Tong’s eyes.

As his finger carefully approached her chin, the first thing that he touched was actually that thin layer of blood aura, which felt like a layer of soft skin.

Nie Tian, who was secretly on guard, realized that nothing strange had happened to it, nor did it burn his finger.

He didn't know that the blood aura that had been formed by the Blood Cocoon Incantation would only generate a counterforce when it detected fluctuations of spiritual power.

At this moment, Nie Tian had already drained his spiritual power. The finger he used to touch Yu Tong's chin didn't carry a smidgen of spiritual energy, and thus didn't cause the blood cocoon to fight back.

“Wow, interesting.”

Laughing, Nie Tian pressed his finger harder downward. As his finger went downward, the thin layer of blood aura gradually gave in and he finally made contact with Yu Tong's chin.

Even though she was isolated by the layer of blood aura, his finger had actually landed on Yu Tong's chin.

When he realized that it wasn't harmful, he gently pressed his palm onto her face.

Sneering broadly he looked into her eyes and gently stroked her cheek with his palm.

Yu Tong's eyes emanated a light of bone-piercing hatred. She was so angry that she was on the verge of going mad. If she weren't in the cocoon, she would tear Nie Tian into pieces at all costs.

Nie Tian put away his smile, and put on a grim face. “What? Are



you angry? Yuan Feng told me that those trial takers from the Cloudsoaring sect and Spiritual Treasure sect all died by your hand. Amongst them were good friends of mine and also possibly... my clansman.

“You killed them. Yet, I am only touching your face. What right do you have to be angry?”

With these words, his hand that had stroked Yu Tong’s cheek suddenly trailed along Yu Tong’s slender, long neck and moved downwards.

Yu Tong’s wide eyes were now filled with shock and terror. Lying on the sandy ground, her alluring body seemed to be trembling with terror.

Nie Tian gazed into her eyes as his hand slowly roamed onto her firm breasts, then he squeezed them vigorously a few times.

Yu Tong finally could no longer bear the humiliation, and snapped her eyes shut.

A devilish yet beautiful blood-colored flush gradually appeared on her snow-white cheeks.

However, Nie Tian, who was inches away from her, suddenly felt somewhat uneasy when he discovered that Yu Tong was going through a change that he didn’t understand.

Therefore, he suddenly removed his hand from Yu Tong's breasts, and moved downwards before ripping a leather pouch away from her waist.

He opened it and saw several kilograms of dried meat, along with a bottle of drinking water.

“Thank you.”

With a final look at Yu Tong, he took out the dried meat and started gulping down huge mouthfuls of it, along with the water.

Knowing that the blood aura ensured that it was impossible to actually kill Yu Tong, he simply humiliated her to the fullest extent and then left, leaving her with nothing more than the wave of a hand.

Four hours after Nie Tian left, the blood aura that had been covering Yu Tong suddenly exploded.

Yu Tong's hysterical scream resounded throughout the desert, as if the burning hatred it contained could fill up the entire universe.

“Nie Tian!”

# Chapter 69: Back to the Starting Point

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Soon after leaving Yu Tong, Nie Tian felt warm currents being gradually surging out from his stomach. Yet, he had only consumed several kilograms worth of dried meat from Yu Tong's leather pouch!

“Wow, such strong surges of power! This must be second grade spirit beast meat!”

Only the meat of a second grade spirit beast would be able to produce such copious amounts of energy. Perhaps, this second grade spirit beast was even more formidable than the Lurker Lizard!”

He suddenly came to a realization.

When they first arrived in the Green Illusion dimension, there had been four second grade spirit beasts. The Frost Python had been the most powerful, and had recently reached the third grade, whereupon it teleported out of the dimension.

As for the rest of them, the Lurker Lizard had already been slaughtered by Jiang Lingzhu's group, and Zheng Bin's group had probably killed another one in the volcano area.

If he guessed right, the dried meat inside Yu Tong's leather pouch should be from the last of the second grade spirit beasts.

At that moment, currents of warmth started to disperse to every corner of Nie Tian's body. Under the nourishment and replenishment of the energy, his exhausted body rapidly recovered.

Since he had been marching on at a fast pace, he didn't have a chance to sit down and quietly channel the energy into his spiritual sea.

However, the energy that had dissipated into his blood and muscles filled him with vigor to the point where he no longer felt the heaviness in his steps.

He knew very well that once Yu Tong recovered the ability to move, she would hunt him down at all costs. Therefore, he didn't dare to stop and replenish his dried up spiritual sea with spirit stones.

Every once in awhile, he would take out the map he had obtained from Yuan Feng, set a direction, and rush forward, regardless of anything else.

He had already given up on heading towards the border between the desert and volcano area to meet An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, and the others. He only wished to return to the entrance of the Green Illusion dimension.

He knew that it was very possible that the disciples of the Ghost sect and Blood sect were still frantically chasing and killing survivors from the Cloudsoaring sect and Spiritual Treasure sect in

the depths of the desert. If he headed in that same direction, it was very likely that he would encounter the Ghost sect and Blood sect disciples.

After forcibly using the rage punch, he was still in a poor condition. His spiritual sea was empty, and he feared that if he were to run into people from the Ghost sect and Blood sect, he would easily be slaughtered.

Furthermore, Yu Tong would also go all out in pursuing him once her condition stabilized and she recovered the ability to move.

He would definitely not choose the path of certain death.

Relying on the scant amount of dried meat that he had obtained from Yu Tong, Nie Tian gradually recovered his physical strength, but he didn't dare to stop and rest, and kept marching on.

After an unknown period of time, he saw numerous glaciers in the distance, and knew that he would be leaving the desert soon.

"I'm almost there," he thought to himself. "I'll recover my power with the spirit stones when I enter the glacier area!"

Two hours later...

He finally dragged his depleted body out of the desert and into the bitterly cold glacier area.

As soon as he arrived at the bottom of the first glacier, he found a secluded valley and covered himself with a pile of snow, before starting to recover his strength with spirit stones.

Without the spirit stones, and only relying on the faint spiritual Qi in the Green Illusion dimension, it would probably take Nie Tian quite a few days to fully recover the spiritual power that he had consumed.

But spirit stones, even the low grade variety, carried pure and refined spiritual power.

Therefore, with their help, the process of recuperation could be sped up by a great extent!

Strands of pure and refined spiritual power were channeled from the spirit stones into his spiritual sea. That pleasant feeling almost made Nie Tian cheer out loud.

“No wonder those guys all had spirit stones with them when they entered the Green Illusion dimension. Cultivating with the spirit stones’ help truly is so much smoother and more relaxing!”

Before long, one spirit stone was drained of its spiritual power, and cracked as it was reduced to an ordinary stone.

He immediately took out another.

In only an hour, he drained seven spirit stones, and his formerly dried up spiritual sea once again brimmed with spiritual power.

As soon as he completely recovered, he regained his confidence, knowing that he would no longer fall prey to anyone.

However, he didn't dare to return to where he had come from, mainly because he didn't wish to face Yu Tong again.

After a few minor adjustments, he crawled out of the pile of snow, and marched on forward.

He only wished to return to the gate of the Green Illusion dimension, and wait for other survivors there.

With the Frost Python gone, the glacier area was no longer dangerous. The scattered first grade spirit beasts had been killed by the disciples from the Spiritual Treasure sect and Grayvale sect.

Originally, he planned to capture a first grade spirit beast, and expand his spiritual sea with its meat, but as it turned out, he couldn't find a single spirit beast along his way.

Time flew...

One day, Nie Tian finally passed through the glacier area and returned to the entrance, thanks to the guidance provided by Yuan Feng's map.

At the foot of the unknown mountain, ash-colored bones sat in the midst of a pile of rubble.

Next to a smooth stone wall sat nine white-garbed young men and women, who were gathered in a huddle, munching on spirit beast meat while simultaneously talking and laughing with one another.

“White clothes... The Mystic Mist sect...”

With a single glance from afar, Nie Tian was sure that those nine people were trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect.

However, seeing them made Nie Tian both elated and worried.

He was elated because, with those nine to help him, even if Yu Tong were to follow him here, he wouldn't fear her.

With Zheng Bin and his group as his backup, Nie Tian, who had recovered his strength, would definitely be able to beat Yu Tong if she were to come to this place by herself.

He no longer needed to worry about his own safety.

However, them showing up here meant that An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, and their group must have failed to meet with them at the border of the desert and volcano area.



With only An Ying and Jiang Lingzhu's power, he feared that they wouldn't be able to match up to the Ghost sect and the Blood sect. He didn't know how many of them had already been killed.

While he was deep in thought, a pretty girl from the Mystic Mist sect spotted him.

“Yee?!”

To this point, he still remained unclothed from waist up, and there were also numerous thin wounds crisscrossed across his body, which had long since formed into scabs.

Moreover, he had been on the run, and thus didn't have the chance to take care of his appearance. His ash-covered face, together with the wounds, that after forming into scabs resembled thin snakes, gave him a sinister look.

Zheng Bin sprung to his feet and stared coldly at him from afar. “Who's there?”

The white-garbed Zheng Bin was born with a handsome face and had grown into a composed young man, who now, compared to the bedraggled Nie Tian, seemed to be radiating rays of sunlight.

Three girls in the group had their beautiful eyes fixed on Zheng Bin the entire time he talked, their eyes filled with adoration.

However, when they shifted their gazes onto Nie Tian, their faces suddenly turned grim, and the adoration in their eyes was immediately replaced by aversion.

Nie Tian walked relaxedly towards them as he answered, “I’m also a trial taker. I entered the Green Illusion dimension with An Ying.”

A girl with an oval-shaped face suddenly became interested. Eyes glittering, she said, “Are you from the Spiritual Treasure sect? Did you guys slaughter the Frost Python in the glacier area?”

Upon hearing her words, the other trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect also grew intrigued.

The glacier area, the desert, and the volcano area weren’t located in a straight line.

That was why the Mystic Mist sect’s disciples didn’t pass the desert and glacier region to return to this place after killing their target spirit beast in the volcano area.

They had taken a different route to return.

Months had passed, and they knew that even if they had gone to the glacier area and the desert to kill the Frost Python and Lurker Lizard, they wouldn’t be successful, so they gave up long ago.

However, the Green Illusion dimension’s rules only prohibited

killing, but not battles among themselves. The reason they came back early was to replenish their power and snatch the spirit beast head from the other three sects.

The way they saw it, since Nie Tian was with the Spiritual Treasure sect, he had just served himself up as prey by coming alone.

“No, we didn’t.”

Nie Tian frowned. Just as he was about to tell them about the Ghost sect and Blood sect’s disciples, Zheng Bin snorted coldly and said with an indifferent face, “Tie him up and search him. We don’t want him to join the Spiritual Treasure sect’s force to fight us when they arrive.”

The girl with the oval-shaped face agreed. “Okay, let’s do it as we planned.”

After that, two white-garbed boys of the Mystic Mist sect sprung to their feet excitedly, and dashed forward to capture Nie Tian without saying a word.

They assumed that since Nie Tian had shown up, An Ying and others from the Spiritual Treasure sect must be right behind him.

They wanted to capture Nie Tian at the first possible moment, so that he wouldn’t be able to assist An Ying in the future.

# Chapter 70: The Chance to Talk

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“Surrender immediately! As long as you behave, we won’t give you a hard time.”

The first to arrive in front of Nie Tian was a robust teenager. He didn’t have any killing intent; all he wanted to do was to tie Nie Tian up, and prevent him from helping An Ying and her group.

From his point of view, since Nie Tian had appeared, An Ying and others from the Spiritual Treasure sect must be right behind him.

“Ignorant fools!” Nie Tian cursed. He had approached with the desire to explain the Ghost sect and Blood sect’s appearance to them. However, he was now infuriated, and thus wanted to teach them a lesson first.

“Hand over your belongings, and let us tie you up,” the other boy said loudly. “Then everything will be fine.”

They were both from subordinate clans of the Mystic Mist sect, in the eighth level of Qi Refining, with strength by no means weak.

However, seeing Nie Tian’s bedraggled state, and that he came alone, they didn’t even bother to bring their spiritual tools out when they stepped forward.

Approaching Nie Tian on the right and left, they reached out to grab his arms and restrain him.

The other trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect were laughing as they enjoyed the show, completely unaware of the fact that the Ghost sect and Blood sect had already entered the Green Illusion dimension and slaughtered many other trial takers.

Clearly, they weren't in the same mental state as Nie Tian, who had engaged in several fierce battles with the Ghost sect and Blood sect starting from almost the very moment he entered the Green Illusion dimension.

Later, he fought with Yuan Feng, Yun Song, and Du Kun, and even had a bloody battle with Yu Tong.

At this moment, a cold expression appeared on Nie Tian's face, and the murderous aura in his eyes suddenly became prominent.

"Li Xi, Jian Xuan, be careful!" yelled Zheng Bin.

He sensed danger from the change in Nie Tian's expression, and suddenly had the feeling that Nie Tian wasn't as ordinary as he seemed.

However, his warnings came too late!

Before Li Xi and Jian Xuan could join forces in offense, Nie Tian let out a cold harrumph, and shot out, whooshing towards Li Xi like a sharp arrow.

Then, he raised his hand and smacked Li Xi's shoulder.

BANG!

Before Li Xi realized what was happening, he was struck and then was sent staggering backwards.

After launching a lightning-quick attack, Nie Tian turned to face Jian Xuan, who was only inches away from him.

BOOM!

Nie Tian's fist pounded onto Jian Xuan's upraised arm.

Jian Xuan, who was about to use his spiritual technique, felt a sudden pain and soreness coming from his arm, as his arm suddenly lost support and dropped down.

Eyes filled with rage, he intended to mobilize his spiritual power and launch a violent counterattack.

At this very moment, Nie Tian moved like a ghostly shadow, ramming into Jian Xuan's chest with a loud bang.

Jian Xuan felt like he was hit by a raging war chariot. With a muffled groan, he staggered several steps backwards.

Nie Tian, on the other hand, took advantage of Jian Xuan's unbalanced body and attacked again, hooking his neck with one hand.

Nie Tian was considerably taller and stronger than his peers. Although Jian Xuan was two years older, he was still shorter than Nie Tian by a few inches.

After hooking onto Jian Xuan's neck, Nie Tian exerted his strength, and actually raised Jian Xuan high up in the air.

Jian Xuan, with his feet dangling half a meter above the ground, had difficulty breathing, and due to that, his whole face turned completely red.

Jian Xuan grabbed Nie Tian's hand with both hands, exerting all of his strength, attempting to pry Nie Tian's hand away from his neck and break away from this humiliating position.

“Urgh! Grrr!”

He kept struggling as his legs unceasingly kicked about.

However, Nie Tian's hand was locked onto his neck as tightly as an iron vice. No matter how violently Jian Xuan struggled, he was still unable to break free.

With cruel and fierce look in his eyes, Nie Tian glared at Jian Xuan. “Behave! Otherwise, I'll snap your neck!”

He even tightened his grip a bit.

As he did, Jian Xuan couldn't even groan any more. Staring at Nie Tian, fear suddenly mounted within Jian Xuan's heart.

Even though he knew that killing wasn't allowed in the Green Illusion dimension, he felt that if he didn't behave, Nie Tian was really going to snap his neck.

Having understood the situation, he immediately quieted down, and no longer dared to struggle about, fearing that he might anger Nie Tian.

At this moment, Li Xi charged towards Nie Tian with torrential waves of anger, holding an axe that glittered with silvery light in his hands.

“Let Jian Xuan go!”

Nie Tian turned around to face him, while still holding Jian Xuan up, and said calmly, “Do you want him dead?”

Li Xi suddenly discovered that Jian Xuan, with his face dark-red, was speaking with his eyes, telling Li Xi not to act rashly.

He immediately stopped.



“Stay your hand!” Zheng Bin called out.

With a cold snort, Nie Tian slightly loosened his hand, so that Jian Xuan could finally start breathing again. “Moments ago, I wanted you to stay your hand, but you guys didn’t give me a chance, and immediately rushed over to attack me.”

However, he didn’t release Jian Xuan, but still held him high up in the air and said, “Can we have a proper talk now?”

Zheng Bin replied in a hurry, “Let go of Jian Xuan, and we’ll talk.”

The girl with the oval-shaped face glowered at Nie Tian as she berated him angrily, “Are you nuts? You almost killed him! We only wanted to capture you so that you can’t help An Ying. We weren’t going to hurt you. Is it necessary for you to react so violently?”

Then, the other boys and girls joined her, pointing at Nie Tian and loudly cursing him for attacking too harshly.

Nie Tian didn’t talk back. Instead, he swept his ice-cold gaze through every one of them.

One after another, they shut their mouths.

At this moment, Nie Tian was still holding Jian Xuan up in the air. Due to his exertion of power, Nie Tian’s contracted muscles

made the scars on his bare upper-body seem especially malevolent.

The interwoven wounds, together with his stern face, made Nie Tian seem as though he had turned into a man-eating beast, his entire body emitting a suffocating aura.

BANG!

When everyone quieted down, Nie Tian nodded and dropped Jian Xuan to the side.

Relieved, Jian Xuan doubled over, inhaling large gulps of air, not daring to attack Nie Tian again.

However, Li Xi's eyes glittered with the desire to attack Nie Tian again after seeing that Jian Xuan was safe.

“Let it be, Li Xi,” said Zheng Bin, frowning.

“Since he let Jian Xuan go, we'll give him face and attack when the Spiritual Treasure sect guys arrive.”

Li Xi said anxiously, “This guy is by no means ordinary. He'll be a great assistance to the Spiritual Treasure sect. If we don't...”

Zheng Bin stopped him from finishing his sentence, and stared coldly at Nie Tian while saying, “One person can't change much. I have my principles. Since you released Jian Xuan, I'll let you off

the hook for now. However, your actions just now have already angered me! I'll make a move on you and seek justice for Jian Xuan when your allies from the Spiritual Treasure sect arrive!"

The other teenagers also urged Zheng Bin to bring Nie Tian under control.

"Elder Brother Bin, you're being too aboveboard!!"

"A guy like him doesn't deserve it. We should capture him now. He's too dangerous. We can't let him join hands with those from the Spiritual Treasure sect!"

"He's right, Elder Brother Bin. Don't be so pedantic. The Spiritual Treasure sect went to the glacier area. They might have already slaughtered the Frost Python! Only the Frost Python's head can be traded for the Heaven Comprehending Pill. Isn't that your ultimate goal for this trial?"

"Be quiet!" Zheng Bin shouted impatiently.

Seeing that he had grown angry, the trial takers finally sealed their lips, glowering at Nie Tian.

The way the three girls who adored Zheng Bin glared at Nie Tian was especially unfriendly.

Despite being glared at by the crowd, Nie Tian appeared surprisingly calm. He first sat down, and then pointed at the

cooked spirit beast meat behind them, saying, “I’m hungry. Get me something to eat first. We’ll talk while we eat.”

“How shameless are you!? You’ve just injured Jian Xuan. As soon as your people from the Spiritual Treasure sect come, you’ll become our enemy. We’re not on the same side, okay? How dare you ask us for food?!” The girl with the oval-shaped face was taken back for a moment, after which she immediately pointed towards Nie Tian and started scolding him, as though she had never seen such a shameless person before in her entire life.

“Enemy?” Nie Tian shook his head. “If I treated you as enemies...”

He looked back at Jian Xuan, and then continued, “He wouldn’t have gotten off so easily. Even though I wouldn’t have killed him because of the rules, I would have surely left him crippled for a few months.”

Upon hearing his words, the girl’s expression flickered.

Zheng Bin looked deeply at him, and after a moment of pondering, he said, “What do you want to talk about?”

Finally, Nie Tian was given the chance to talk. He put on a wry smile and sighed. “I really envy your luck. Only one of you is dead, and you’ve hunted down and killed that second grade spirit beast from the volcano area.”

He had long since spotted the gigantic wolf head behind the crowd, which apparently belonged to the Ghostly Fire Wolf.

Zheng Bin's face turned grim, as heartache flashed in his eyes. "Are you making fun of us? During our fight with the Ghostly Fire Wolf, a brother died for being too sloppy. It was only one second grade spirit beast. With our strength, we should have finished it off easily. There shouldn't have been any casualties.

"I know that if there are no mishaps, with Yuan Feng and An Ying's strength, they're definitely able to kill their respective targets with no casualties.

"Unlike us, suffering one death. I don't even know how to report to the sect elders after we get out."

Nie Tian noticed that while he was speaking, the other teenagers from the Mystic Mist sect all seemed sad and grim, as if they were secretly blaming themselves.

He suddenly realized the relationships among the Mystic Mist sect disciples were probably the most harmonious of the four sects.

However, he had to reveal the cruel reality to them.

"You should consider yourselves lucky." He said coldly. "The Grayvale sect's disciples have been wiped out. None of them survived."

Upon hearing these words, everyone's expression flickered, and couldn't refrain from exclaiming. "It's impossible!!"

Nie Tian continued, "The Grayvale sect wasn't the only one. The Spiritual Treasure sect and Cloudsoaring sect have also suffered great casualties. I don't know how many of them are still alive, and when they'll be able to get here.

"It's also possible that they've all died, and none of them will show up here.

"This is all because disciples of the Ghost sect and Blood sect have also entered the Green Illusion dimension!

"They're also here for a trial. Only their mission was slightly different from ours. We're here to kill spirit beasts. They're here to kill us." Nie Tian said in a solemn and powerful tone.

Every boy and girl from the Mystic Mist sect was taken aback by his words, as their faces suddenly turned pale.

# Chapter 71: Seizing the Opportunity to Cultivate

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Every trial taker from the Mystic Mist sect was silenced, and not a single voice could be heard.

None of them questioned the truthfulness of Nie Tian's words.

If Nie Tian hadn't captured Jian Xuan in such violent fashion, perhaps they would have thought that he was making it up to frighten them, in order to avoid being captured.

However, Zheng Bin had already made clear his intentions with Nie Tian, that they would temporarily ignore him and start the battle when the others from the Spiritual Treasure sect arrived.

That meant Nie Tian was momentarily safe.

In such a situation, it was absolutely unnecessary for Nie Tian to lie to them or attempt to frighten them.

Upon hearing the news that the Ghost sect and Blood sect were also in the Green Illusion dimension, those teenagers clearly grew distressed and helpless.

“The Ghost sect, the Blood sect...”

The Ghost sect and the Blood sect were like two immense

mountains that were placed on their chests, making it almost impossible for them to breathe, especially when they learned that everyone from the Grayvale sect had been killed.

They knew that Yuan Feng from the Grayvale sect was extremely hard to deal with, and the Grayvale sect's trial takers were by no means weaker than them.

Even they had been wiped out. If it weren't for the fact that they were lucky enough to have not encountered any Ghost sect and Blood sect disciples in the volcano area, it would be hard to say how many of them could have survived to this day...

They didn't even have the courage to think further.

A long moment passed, after which Zheng Bin was the first to snap back to reality. He took a deep breath and ordered, "Go get him some spirit beast meat."

Li Xi was compliant this time. He walked back to their camp wordlessly and picked up a sizable piece of cooked spirit beast meat, before walking back to Nie Tian with a complicated expression and handing him the meat.

Nie Tian nodded, but didn't say anything. He took it and started tearing it apart with his teeth and gulping down large chunks.

The trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect looked silently at him as he ate, and the atmosphere grew exceptionally grim.



They automatically gathered together by Nie Tian's side, waiting quietly.

The pretty girl who had been the first to spot Nie Tian, looked at his unclothed upper body, and after a moment of hesitation, took a white garment from a bag beside the Ghostly Fire Wolf's head and threw it gently to Nie Tian.

Moments later, Nie Tian had devoured the five kilograms worth of spirit beast meat. The only reason he didn't ask for more was that he didn't want to scare the trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect.

He picked the white garment up and put it on. Only then did he say, "What do you guys want to know?"

"Everything you've been through!" Zheng Bin said in a deep voice.

"Okay." Nie Tian nodded, and without holding anything back, relayed the few, small-scale battles that he had fought against the disciples from the Ghost sect and Blood sect, not leaving a single detail.

As for Yuan Feng and Yun Song's deaths, he naturally blamed them on the Blood sect's Yu Tong.

He believed that even if Yu Tong showed up and pointed out that

it was him who had killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song, given Yu Tong's status as a Blood sect disciple, it would be impossible for the trial takers to believe her.

Actually, he even doubted that Yu Tong would bother to refute the assertion.

If the fact that he had killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song was exposed, Nie Tian would inevitably have to bear the wrath of the four sects.

However, to Yu Tong, it was her very mission to kill Yuan Feng and other trial takers. It was unforgivable for Nie Tian, but honorable for Yu Tong.

Actually, Yu Tong might even be willing to take the blame.

After he had told them everything, the girl with the oval-shaped face stared at him with disbelief. "You've killed a Ghost sect disciple, and escaped from Yu Tong? And Yu Tong... broke into the Lesser Heaven stage?"

"Liar..." Li Xi muttered.

The other trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect also seemed to be doubting the authenticity of his words, suspecting that he was merely bragging.

In their eyes, if Yu Tong had truly broken into the Lesser Heaven

stage, she would have possessed unparalleled strength in the Green Illusion dimension.

Even Yuan Feng died by her hands. How could a nobody like Nie Tian be able to escape from her?

They would never have expected that not only was Nie Tian able to escape Yu Tong's pursuit, but he also managed to inflict serious damage on her twice.

Nie Tian continued with a firm expression, "Oh, perhaps I wasn't clear enough. After Yu Tong killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song, she sustained injuries, and consumed most of her power. Only because of that was I able to escape from her pursuit and flee here."

He only wanted for the Mystic Mist sect's trial takers to believe that it was Yu Tong who killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song.

However, from the look of it, they didn't buy the first version of his explanation. Thus, he made a supplementary explanation which made his story more reasonable.

Sure enough, the trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect believed him after hearing the additional details.

They assumed that there had been something wrong with Yu Tong. Otherwise, with Yu Tong's Lesser Heaven stage cultivation base, she wouldn't possibly spare Nie Tian's life.

Face grim, Zheng Bin turned to his team members and said, “Even if Yu Tong was injured, and wore out her strength, the fact that you’ve survived from her pursuit is enough evidence that you’re no ordinary individual. Many of you might not have heard of Yu Tong of the Blood sect, and you don’t know how frightening that woman is.

“Let me put it this way. Even if she was at the Qi Refining stage, I would still be no match for her.

“If she has indeed entered the Lesser Heaven stage, and I fought her, I wouldn’t have even the hope of escaping alive, let alone winning.”

With a solemn expression on his face, Zheng Bin didn’t exaggerate his strength in front of everyone, but rather stated what he believed was true.

“Then we’re screwed, aren’t we, Elder Brother Bin?” Li Xi said with a sour face.

Apparently, the girl with the oval-shaped face was quite rattled. “What should we do? The Blood sect and the Ghost sect are so powerful. Perhaps they have already targeted us, and they could appear at any moment!” She subconsciously glanced around as she spoke, as if the Ghost sect and the Blood sect’s disciples would rush out in the next second.

Zheng Bin also couldn’t come up with a solution. “I suppose now we can only cross that bridge when we get to it. I just hope that An

Ying and Jiang Lingzhu survived, and can get here as soon as possible.”

While they were talking, Nie Tian felt those warm currents gradually rising up from within his stomach.

He realized that the spirit beast meat that he had just consumed was now releasing energy after a period of digestion.

“I’ve marched long and fast. I’m exhausted, and need to recover. I’ll leave you guys alone.” After notifying Zheng Bin, he closed his eyes, and started to use the Qi Refining Incantation to channel the energy to expand his spiritual sea, as well as restore his physical strength.

Zheng Bin nodded. “Alright, let me know if you need anything. We’ll do our best to accommodate your needs.”

Nie Tian immediately said, “If you don’t mind, can I have some more spirit beast meat? I’ve been starving for a very, very long time. I need more food to recover my strength.”

“No problem.” Zheng Bin was very straightforward as he prompted Li Xi to fetch more cooked spirit beast meat for Nie Tian.

After wolfing down the meat, Nie Tian expressed his gratitude to Zheng Bin in a low voice, and immediately after, he closed his eyes and started cultivating.

In the following few days, he practically didn't move an inch away from his spot. Every time he finished cultivating, he would then request for more food from the Mystic Mist sect disciples.

After devouring large quantities of spirit beast meat, he would immediately close his eyes and start his cultivation, not conversing with any of the trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect.

At the beginning, Zheng Bin and the others thought he ate a lot because he was incomparably hungry.

However, as Nie Tian requested for more and more spirit beast meat, they gradually realized a fact: Nie Tian's appetite was shockingly large all the time!

They had already started to call Nie Tian a "bottomless pit" behind his back.

However, since they had more than enough spirit beast meat lying around, no one bothered to say anything. Every time, they would satisfy Nie Tian's request by offering enough meat for ten people to eat.

Nie Tian, on the other hand, knew that Yu Tong would never let him off so easily, and thus always had his guard up. Now that he had the Mystic Mist sect disciples to protect him while he was cultivating, as well as a sufficient spirit beast meat supply, he surely wouldn't miss such an exceptionally good opportunity.

He kept consuming the spirit beast meat, and using the power within to expand his spiritual sea, so as to prepare himself for possible future battles.

One day, he woke up from his cultivation and examined his spiritual sea, discovering that after days of painstaking practice, his spiritual sea had only expanded by fifteen percent.

“It’s a shame that the energy first grade spirit beasts can provide is quite limited.”

The energy stored in second grade spirit beast meat was seven times more than that of first grade spirit beasts, which meant if he used first grade spirit beast meat to cultivate, the speed of his improvement would be seven times slower.

Unsatisfied with his speed of improvement, Nie Tian cast a glance at the Ghostly Fire Wolf’s head. “The Ghostly Fire Wolf is also a second grade spirit beast. I wonder if they brought its meat with them to this place.”

Just as he was about to inquire about the wolf meat, a sound rang out from the distance. Before long, Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian appeared from behind a pile of rubble.

“It’s been five days.” Li Xi said excitedly. “Finally, someone has come!”

“Jiang Lingzhu!” Zheng Bin suddenly became enlivened.

As Jiang Lingzhu approached, she spotted Zheng Bin at first glance, and looking extremely excited, she said, “Zheng Bin! I can’t believe that you are here! This is great!! We thought we were doomed!”

She sounded like a drowning person who had just caught sight of a rescue boat. With the newly found hope to survive, she instantly became full of spirit.



## Chapter 72: Patching A Lie

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Seeing that Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian had arrived, Nie Tian temporarily abandoned any notions of asking about the Ghostly Fire Wolf meat.

He rose to his feet after sitting quietly for a long time, looking at the two from afar.

The green-garbed Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian seemed distinctively thinner than before.

Jiang Lingzhu's eyes were still bright and flickering, but she was covered in dirt, and her green robe was in tatters. From the holes he could see at the corners, Nie Tian could tell they had been caused by sharp weapons.

Meanwhile, Nie Xian, who was also from the Nie clan, looked even worse. His sect-issued green robe seemed as if it had been torn to pieces and then sewn back together.

At first glance, he looked like a beggar from the gutters of Black Cloud City, extremely dirty and disordered.

“Zheng Bin, water!” Jiang Lingzhu shouted as she approached, “Get us some water! How come you guys are here? Did you run into the Hell sect's disciples in the volcano area?”

After coming closer, she suddenly caught sight of Nie Tian, and

couldn't help but exclaim, "Ah! Nie Tian!"

"Nie Tian!" An incredible expression appeared on Nie Xian's face. "You're... you're still alive?!?!"

As far as Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian were concerned, Nie Tian should have been dead already.

Wandering around in the desert by himself, how could he possibly escape from the Ghost sect and Blood sect?

When Yu Tong and Mo Xi had caught up to them, Yu Tong had told them about the Blood Searching Compass and that wherever they escaped to, she would be able to ferret them out.

It would be impossible for Nie Tian to hide all traces of himself from Yu Tong's Blood Searching Compass.

When they found him, how could he possibly escape from the Blood sect and Ghost sect disciples, much less single-handedly defeat them?

Therefore, both of them believed that Nie Tian had long since died, and had never expected to meet him here.

"Long time no see," Nie Tian said with a smile. "I can finally rest at ease now that I know the two of you are alive."

“Jian Xuan!” Zheng Bin barked. “What are you waiting for? Go get them some water!”

Jian Xuan, who was still in a near-daze after the near-death experience from several days ago, snapped back to reality and quickly grabbed two water canteens, then ran over and handed them to Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian.

Casting away her usual lady-like manners, Jiang Lingzhu gulped down water as fast as she could, resulting in her straight, elegant neck being covered in sparkling drops of water.

Nie Xian virtually inhaled the water, and it wasn't until he finished the entire canteen that he finally stopped and sat down weakly on the ground. Puzzled, he asked, “Nie Tian, did the Ghost sect and Blood sect find you?”

“A Ghost sect disciple found me, but I killed him,” Nie Tian explained in a low voice.

Nie Xian stared deeply at him for a moment, then nodded. “Well done.”

Ever since Nie Tian showed up and fought off Yu Tong, saving them from a perilous situation, he started to have a new level of respect for this clan brother of his.

He had a vague feeling that some sort of incomprehensible miracle must have happened to Nie Tian, making his true strength

unfathomable.

Therefore, he had come to believe that Nie Tian, who had previously forced Yu Tong to retreat, would have the ability to kill him, if he had only encountered one Ghost sect disciple.

After finishing her canteen of fresh water, Jiang Lingzhu began to describe the fight between them and the Ghost sect and Blood sect, under the inquisitive gazes of Zheng Bin and the others.

Just as they had been about to emerge from the desert and enter the volcanic region, the Ghost sect and Blood sect's disciples had caught up with them. A battle immediately broke out.

During the battle, Yu Tong from the Blood sect stepped into the Lesser Heaven stage, causing her strength to skyrocket. With numerous powerful forbidden techniques, her unparalleled, godly strength wasn't something they could match.

They hadn't been able to see even a shred of hope of victory.

Their only option was to spread out and run, so that Yu Tong and the others wouldn't be able to trap everyone in one spot and kill them all.

After escaping from the battlefield, Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian exerted all effort to lose Mo Xi, who had been chasing them persistently, until they finally arrived at this place, looking completely bedraggled.

Ever since splitting up, they never saw Ye Gumo from the Cloudsoaring sect again, and had no idea what happened to him.

Neither did they encounter An Ying and her people, and were thus unsure about their fate as well.

After listening to their encounters, Nie Tian felt relieved, “If Mo Xi chased after you, then there should be quite a few survivors from the Spiritual Treasure sect.”

Jiang Lingzhu looked confused. “What do you mean?” she asked. “Since Mo Xi went after us, An Ying and her group should have been targeted by Yu Tong. She’s even more terrifying than Mo Xi. How can you be sure that An Ying will make it here alive?”

“Because Yu Tong went after Yuan Feng and Yun Song,” Nie Tian said with a calm and relaxed tone. “After killing them, that witch... targeted me next. Without her in the picture, those handful of Blood sect disciples couldn’t have possibly killed An Ying and Pan Tao all by themselves.”

“What? Yu Tong tried to kill you?!” Jiang Lingzhu was greatly shocked. “How did you make it here alive?”

Nie Xian was also taken aback, his expression flickering as he looked over at Nie Tian.

Unlike the Mystic Mist sect disciples, they had personally

witnessed Yu Tong's formidable power. Even to this day, they would still tremble with fear upon hearing her name.

It was safe to say that it was because of Yu Tong stepping into the Lesser Heaven stage that they had no other choice but to split up and flee the battlefield.

Yu Tong had crushed their defenses practically single-handedly!

If such a frightening Yu Tong had locked her gaze onto Nie Tian, it was practically impossible for him to survive.

At that time, Li Xi explained on Nie Tian's behalf, "It was only because Yu Tong had sustained injuries and lost her battle prowess after killing Yuan Feng and Yun Song that he managed to survive."

Jiang Lingzhu glanced at him, furrowed her beautiful brow, and said, "What do you know?!"

Li Xi looked confused.

Jiang Lingzhu looked over at Nie Tian, the suspicion clear on her face. "When we split up and fled, both Yuan Feng and Yun Song had sustained different degrees of injuries and consumed even more power than Yu Tong. They didn't have the slightest bit of fighting spirit. However, when Yu Tong started to chase after everyone, she was at her peak. Considering Yu Tong's strength, I don't think that killing them would consume much of her energy."

“As for injuring Yu Tong...” She shook her head and said. “They wouldn’t have a chance.”

“Did you lie to us?” Zheng Bin’s face turned grim as he asked Nie Tian. “Did you or did you not run into Yu Tong? Did she really chase after you?”

“Liar!” cried Han Xin, the girl with the oval-shaped face.

The other Mystic Mist sect disciples also started to cast unpleasant glances towards Nie Tian.

After a moment of hesitation, Jiang Lingzhu continued in a low voice, “Nie Tian, I really can’t fathom your strength... I do believe that you would have been able to run away from Yu Tong if she hadn’t broken through into the Lesser Heaven stage. But after stepping into the Lesser Heaven stage, she was indeed extremely deadly! It would be almost impossible for you to escape from her control and make it here alive.”

Nie Tian smiled bitterly at heart, thinking to himself that it was indeed hard to cover up a lie without leaving the faintest trace.

There was no way that he would tell Jiang Lingzhu about how powerful the raging fist strike that he had picked up from the mysterious land was.

Therefore, after remaining silent for a while, he laughed somewhat embarrassedly and said, “Well, I did run into Yu Tong.

However, she actually came across the Frost Python after she killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song. The Frost Python is the strongest spirit beast in the Green Illusion dimension, and during her fight with it she accidentally got injured.”

He knew that the Frost Python had gotten out of the Green Illusion dimension and would probably never show up again. As a second grade spirit beast, it also possessed formidable power. Hence, blaming Yu Tong’s injuries on it seemed the most reasonable.

“Oh, the Frost Python showed up. It makes sense then.” It seemed that Jiang Lingzhu finally bought his story. “That Frost Python was really something. It somehow possessed exceptional intelligence. From the look of it, it won’t be long before it enters the next level. It would be impossible for Yu Tong to single-handedly slaughter it without paying a heavy price.”

“You should have told us the truth,” Zheng Bin said coldly.

Voice full of disdain, Han Xin said, “So the real reason that you’re alive is because Yu Tong consumed considerable energy after killing Yuan Feng and the Frost Python successively. I really believed that ... you possessed outstanding power.”

Li Xi joined the criticism. “By not telling us about the Frost Python, he hoped to fool us into thinking that he was capable and beyond ordinary.”

Nie Tian, on the other hand, stroked his nose, and ignored their



comments.

After that, Zheng Bin continuously inquired Jiang Lingzhu about the details of their battle with the Ghost sect and the Blood sect, wishing to get a full understanding of their strength, and at the same time, perhaps find a way to handle them.

After being mocked by the Mystic Mist sect disciples, Nie Tian didn't think it was a good time for him to ask about the Ghostly Fire Wolf's meat. Therefore, he just sat beside Nie Xian.

Although Nie Xian was full of questions, he chose not to ask Nie Tian at that time. Instead, he took out the spirit stone that the Cloudsoaring sect had bestowed upon him, and started recovering.

Before long, Jiang Lingzhu finished her conversation with Zheng Bin. She didn't immediately start recuperation, but rather pointed towards Nie Tian and said, "Come with me. I've got something to say to you."

Confused, Nie Tian froze for a moment. Seeing that Jiang Lingzhu was already headed towards the other side of the stone wall, he could only rise to his feet and silently catch up to her.

## Chapter 73: You're the Worst!

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Before long, Jiang Lingzhu stopped at a secluded location, and turned around to look at Nie Tian.

Hydrated, Jiang Lingzhu had finally restored most of her strength, and her bright eyes glittered with rays of intimidating light again.

Nie Tian was completely confused by the way she stared at him; it seemed that she was examining him from head to toe.

Nie Tian stopped and looked over his shoulder. He quickly realized that they had already reached the other side of the mountain, and that the trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect had disappeared from his sight.

“Well...” she said, then hesitated for a moment. “You killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song, didn’t you?”

Nie Tian’s heart skipped a beat, but his face didn’t change a bit, then he asked in a surprised tone, “You’re frightening me a bit, senior martial sister. Why would I possibly kill Yuan Feng and Yun Song?”

Jiang Lingzhu was the precious daughter of the Cloudsoaring sectmaster Jiang Zhisu, and a core disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect. Nie Tian, on the other hand, was from a subordinate clan, and might only possibly be accepted into the Cloudsoaring sect in the future. Therefore, due to seniority, he had to address Jiang

Lingzhu as senior martial sister.

He had the confidence to become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect by the age of 15, and thus he addressed her as such in advance.

“How could you dare to do such a thing?!” Jiang Lingzhu said with a glare. “It wouldn’t be so bad if you only killed Yun Song, since he wasn’t a big deal. But that Yuan Feng was viewed as a seeded disciple of the Grayvale sect. Many elders from the Grayvale sect believed he’d have a promising future. Once they find out about you killing him, even the Cloudsoaring sect won’t be able to protect you.”

Nie Tian looked hurt. “I didn’t do it.”

“You can fool Zheng Bin, but you can’t fool me!” Jiang Lingzhu said, looking even more irritated.

“What proof do you have?” Nie Tian said with a composed expression.

Jiang Lingzhu stared meaningfully at him for a moment before bursting into laughter. “You... I can’t believe you can still act composed. Nevertheless, I do admire you for being able to kill Yuan Feng and Yun Song with a inferior cultivation base, whether they were injured or not.”

Nie Tian continued to quibble. “I really didn’t.”

“You still won’t admit it!?” Jiang Lingzhu said with a snort. “Yuan Feng had a banner on him which is now in your pouch, right?”

Flabbergasted, Nie Tian was struck speechless.

“That banner is of the fourth level of Medium grade. When we were besieged by the Blood sect and Ghost sect, he fought with it. To this day, I still have a deep impression of the spiritual power fluctuations that banner emanates. I can’t be wrong.” Eyes wide, Jiang Lingzhu cursed in a low voice, “Idiot... a spiritual tool at that grade is by no means ordinary. Even if they’re not activated by spiritual power, if not stored in special containers they will still give out faint fluctuations.

“I can cast a special incantation which allows me to perceive even the slightest fluctuations of spiritual power. It was when I got near you after my conversation with Zheng Bin that I was able to detect the faint fluctuations that came from the banner.”

Without giving Nie Tian time to explain, Jiang Lingzhu continued analyzing, “According to you, it was Yu Tong who killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song. If that was the case, it would have been impossible for you to obtain Yuan Feng’s banner. Furthermore, if you obtained it before Yu Tong arrived, Yuan Feng should have been alive, and how on earth would he be willing to give you that fourth level Medium grade spirit weapon?

“Only if he was already dead before Yu Tong appeared would you have been able to obtain that banner from him.

“So, you must have killed him before she showed up, and looted everything he owned and placed it into your pouch.”

With these words, Jiang Lingzhu looked at him with a complacent smile on her face, as if to say, Let’s see how you argue with that.

Realizing that Jiang Lingzhu had seen through his lies, Nie Tian put on a bitter smile. With a shrug, he said, “You’re good, senior martial sister.”

Jiang Lingzhu threw her head back. “Of course!”

Nie Tian tried to explain. “When Yuan Feng and Yun Song met me, they were like mad dogs, insistent on killing me. I had no other choice, so...”

“Alright, alright!” Jiang Lingzhu waved her hand to stop him and said, “I’m not interested in why you did it. I’m also tired of those two. You killed them. So be it. But you need to be careful and don’t expose it. Remember, you have to insist that it was Yu Tong from the Blood sect who killed them.”

Nie Tian nodded. “Oh, okay.”

Jiang Lingzhu reached out her hand and said, “Gimme that banner and all of Yuan Feng’s belongings. You can’t carry them on you.”

After knowing that the banner would release faint fluctuations and that it would probably put him in danger, Nie Tian unhesitatingly handed her the banner, as well as the map that he had looted from Yuan Feng.

Jiang Lingzhu took the banner and the map and pressed them against the jade bracelet on her wrist. In a split second, they both vanished.

Nie Tian's eyes suddenly lit up.

Jiang Lingzhu explained casually, "This is an item of a much higher grade than that cloth pouch of yours. If not for my father, I also wouldn't be able to have access to a bracelet of holding. The cloth pouch you used to store the banner and the map can't seal off the minute energy fluctuations of the banner. When you emerged from the Green Illusion dimension, the disciples of the Greyvale sect would have instantly detected the banner in your cloth pouch. If that happened, you wouldn't be able to talk your way out of the situation no matter what lies you came up with"

Nie Tian's expression flickered as he earnestly said, "Many thanks, senior martial sister."

"Sooner or later, you're going to be a member of the Cloudsoaring sect. It's a given that I help you." Jiang Lingzhu narrowed her eyes, and with a smile she said, "Also, you actually managed to kill Yuan Feng! Seriously, how many secrets do you have? Tell me, now."

Nie Tian quickly shook his head. “I really don’t have any secrets.”

“Hmm! Do you take me for an idiot or something?” Jiang Lingzhu glanced at him out of the corner of her eye. Huffing, she said, “The other day, my father came back from the Nie clan and said an extremely audacious kid dared to lie to his face. Later, I found out from Uncle Li Fan that it was you!”

Nie Tian bowed his head. “I’m being serious. How could I dare to lie to the sectmaster? I was only scared to the point that I couldn’t remember much!”

“Save it. I’ve seen through you. You’re the worst among the entire Nie clan!” Jiang Lingzhu seemed angry, but actually she wasn’t. From her point of view, since Nie Tian was a member of the Nie clan, he would naturally become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect in the future.

Such an audacious, fierce, and resourceful young man, who was currently only ten years old, could turn out to be a great fortune for the Cloudsoaring sect in the future.

She had already decided that if they could both make it out of the Green Illusion dimension alive, she would plead for her father to immediately accept him into the sect, even if it meant that they would have to break the rules.

She had the feeling that the Spiritual Treasure sect’s An Shiyi, as

well as An Ying and Pan Tao, also had high opinions of Nie Tian.

She feared that the Spiritual Treasure sect might beat her to it.

In that moment, Han Xin's voice echoed out from the other side of the mountain. "People from the Spiritual Treasure sect! People from the Spiritual Treasure sect are here!"

"Alright, that's all I have to say," Jiang Lingzhu said in a low voice. "I'll return the banner to you when you come to the Cloudsoaring sect."

"Thank you, senior martial sister," Nie Tian said sincerely.

He understood that if it weren't for Jiang Lingzhu keeping that banner in her bracelet of holding, then when he left the Green Illusion dimension later on, it was very likely that the Grayvale sect would expose his lies, and subsequently, bring fatal disaster upon him.

He was quite smart, however, he knew nothing about high grade spiritual tools and special containers, and because of that, almost fell into a huge trap.

After unveiling the truth, Jiang Lingzhu didn't blame him for killing Yuan Feng and Yun Song. Instead, she actually helped him to cover it up. He would take that to heart.

"Let's go and see who's returned," said Jiang Lingzhu.



Nie Tian nodded. Without further ado, they returned to the campsite where everyone else was waiting.

“Nie Tian! You’re still alive!” Upon catching sight of him, Pan Tao immediately rushed forward gave him an amiable thump on the chest. “I thought you were dead!” Redness could be seen in Pan Tao’s eyes. Clearly, he was in a very emotional state.

No one in the Spiritual Treasure sect admired Nie Tian more than he did. He knew about Nie Tian’s exceptional abilities, and considered him as a fellow fighter.

When Nie Tian left despite everything, Pan Tao was the one who had exerted all means to persuade him to stay, and after failing, he hoped that nothing would happen to Nie Tian.

After finding that Pan Tao, An Ying, Zheng Rui, and Jiang Miao were all safe and sound, Nie Tian gave a heartfelt smile. “Hahaha, it’s nice that everyone is fine.”

“Not everyone.” An Ying’s eyes dimmed. “The four of us are the only survivors. Tong Hao, Guo Qi, and the others are all dead.”

Upon hearing the bad news, Nie Tian heaved a sigh and fell into silence.

## Chapter 74: The Blood Sect's Earth Web

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The trial takers from the three sects waited silently by the Secret Dimension Gate.

Unfortunately, no other survivors arrived in the following days.

It was only half a month away from the conclusion of the Green Illusion dimension trial. Logically speaking, if there were other survivors, they would have arrived already.

Even though no one said anything, everyone was sure that those who hadn't arrived had most likely been killed by the Ghost sect and the Blood sect.

During that period of time, Nie Tian couldn't obtain enough spirit beast meat to cultivate at a high speed.

His daily allotted portion of spirit beast meat wasn't even one tenth of what he had gotten in the past. He wasn't even able to get enough to sate his hunger.

Han Xin took small bites of the spirit beast meat in her hand as she glared at Nie Tian. "It's all because of that Nie Tian," she said. "If he hadn't eaten so much earlier, we wouldn't be left with so little rations of food now."

The other trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect also glowered at Nie Tian while roasting the spirit beast meat.

Sitting beside Pan Tao, Jiang Lingzhu, and their group, Nie Tian pretended that he hadn't heard their whispers.

The spirit beast meat the Mystic Mist sect had brought to this place was originally more than enough to support them until the gate reopened, so when Nie Tian had requested spirit beast meat earlier, Zheng Bin wasn't stingy at all and had accommodated his need as much as possible.

However, with the arrival of Jiang Lingzhu, Nie Xian, An Ying, and the others, food stores immediately ran low.

Due to the pursuit of the Ghost sect and the Blood sect, Jiang Lingzhu, An Ying, and the others were forced to travel light, and as a result most of their spirit beast meat had been discarded along the way.

Although Jiang Lingzhu possessed a bracelet of holding, due to her lack of experience, she hadn't thought to stock up on food.

The food that they had been carrying had been consumed long before they arrived at the gate.

Furthermore, there weren't any spirit beasts near the Secret Dimension Gate, and they didn't dare to travel too far to hunt, for fear the Blood sect and the Ghost sect might launch an assault on them. Therefore, they had no choice but to ask for food from the Mystic Mist sect.

Yet, Nie Tian alone had devoured a large proportion of the Mystic Mist sect's meat stock during the past few days.

There was still half a month left until the Secret Dimension Gate would open, and unfortunately, they were already seeing the bottom of the spirit beast meat storage.

Without a better solution, they could only eat less and live frugally, hoping that they could rough it out till the day the gate was reopened.

However, whenever the Mystic Mist sect disciples felt starving, they would think of Nie Tian, the "bottomless pit".

In the same way, whenever it came time to distribute food, they would stare at Nie Tian resentfully, and whisper curses.

Knowing that he wouldn't win in an argument, Nie Tian completely ignored their grumbling and pretended he heard nothing.

Grrr.

After swallowing a small piece of spirit beast meat, a loud sound rumbled out from Nie Tian's belly. With a bitter expression, he rubbed his belly and murmured, "Just hang in there for a few more days."

Now that they had a food shortage, Nie Tian was being rationed just as much as everyone else.

Even those who had small appetites couldn't get full, not to mention him.

At this moment, Jiang Miao, who was sitting next to Nie Tian, handed her ration of spirit beast meat to him. "Here, take it," she whispered. "I don't eat much, and I'm not hungry anyway."

"Well, look what we have here!" Jiang Lingzhu said with a taunting laugh.

An Ying glanced over, but said nothing as she quietly went back to her share.

Pan Tao chuckled.

Jiang Miao's face immediately flushed. Embarrassed, she lowered her head, not daring to look at Nie Tian.

Nie Tian froze for a moment, looking at Jiang Miao, confused. Soon, he noticed that the baby-faced Jiang Miao was clearly thinner than before.

Nie Tian didn't reach out to grab the meat, but rather stood up and said, "Thank you, but actually I'm not that hungry. I'll go take a look in the vicinity to see if I can find stuff to eat."

“You can’t go out there!” Jiang Miao replied hastily. “It’s too dangerous!”

A bit farther away, Nie Xian’s face grew grim. “Don’t do it, Nie Tian. People from the Blood sect and the Ghost sect could show up at any moment. If you accidentally run into those devils, I’m afraid you won’t be able to return to us.”

“It’s alright, I won’t go far,” Nie Tian promised. “If anything comes up, I’ll return immediately.”

Pan Tao rose to his feet. “I’m a little bored myself. I’ll go with you.”

“Me, too,” said Jiang Lingzhu, standing up and grinning. “I could use some walking and stretching.”

Their conversation and actions were immediately noticed by Zheng Bin, who came over and asked about the situation.

After realizing what they planned to do, Zheng Bin turned to Jiang Lingzhu, expression dour as he said, “No one knows when the disciples of the Ghost sect and Blood sect will appear, or how many people they have. If you all go, we’ll fall short on battle power. If by chance the Ghost sect and Blood sect raid us while you’re gone, I’m afraid we won’t be able to hold our own.”

With a shrug, Jiang Lingzhu sat back down. “Alright then, I’ll

stay.”

Inwardly, she knew that Zheng Bin’s words made sense; if she left the crowd at this time, it would put her, Zheng Bin, and everyone else in danger. Therefore, she looked at the bigger picture and chose to stay.

“What about us?” Pan Tao asked. He didn’t look very happy, and was apparently disgruntled at being controlled by Zheng Bin.

Zheng Bin’s gaze shifted between Pan Tao and Nie Tian, and after a moment of hesitation, he said, “If it’s just the two of you, I’m okay with it.”

Pan Tao let out a cold harrumph. “Are you saying that we don’t matter?”

“I’m not looking for an argument,” Zheng Bin replied. “But I hope you two will take my advice and stay put. It would be better for everyone.”

“Sorry,” Pan Tao replied. “I don’t like being told what to do.” With that, he turned and left.

Nie Tian smiled and caught up with him.

...

Meanwhile...

Seven disciples of the Ghost sect and the Blood sect, under the leadership of Yu Tong and Mo Xi, were standing on a pile of dried bones. As for Yu Tong, she was in the middle holding the Blood Searching Compass.

After a moment passed, she put it away. Her beautiful eyebrows slightly furrowed as she said, "Sixteen people, only five hundred meters away from us. Those who escaped from the palm of our hands should have merged with those from the Mystic Mist sect. They're right at the Secret Dimension Gate, waiting for it to reopen. We only have half a month left."

"Sixteen?" Mo Xi grinned. "Last time we ran into them at the border of the desert, they had more people. Didn't we slaughter many of them and send the rest fleeing? What are you hesitating over, Yu Tong? You've broken through into the Lesser Heaven stage. Who could match your strength?"

Heart seething with hatred, Yu Tong murmured to herself, "There's one..."

She took a deep breath, and a blood-colored light flashed in her pupils, "Seven against sixteen. We're too outnumbered. In order to be safe... I'm going to use the Earth Web!"

"The Earth Web!" Mo Xi and the others exclaimed at the same time, looking at her with faces full of disbelief.



With a grim expression, Mo Xi said, “The Earth Web is a dangerous forbidden technique. Only Qi warriors with Heaven stage or higher cultivation bases should be able to use it. Plus, even if a Heaven stage Qi warrior were to use the Earth Web, that person would inevitably sustain a vital injury afterwards! You just entered the Lesser Heaven stage. You won’t be able to use it. And you shouldn’t exert yourself!”

“I can wield it with the help of the Blood Bead,” Yu Tong said firmly, as she took out a eye-shaped, blood-colored bead from her bracelet of holding.

“Nie Tian!” she bellowed inwardly.

A Blood sect teenager said anxiously, “Senior martial sister, even if you manage to use the Earth Web with the Blood Bead’s help, you’ll suffer from the backlash yourself.”

“Yu Tong, you’re very important to your sect,” Mo Xi continued, “much more important than the result of this trial. I hope you understand this. I’ve gone on missions with you before. You’ve always been rational and don’t force yourself beyond your limits. I bet you know that if your sect learns about you using the Earth Web to kill those guys, and hurting yourself in the process, they will punish you instead of rewarding you, right?”

“What happened to you? Some of them truly infuriated you, didn’t they? How come you’re so reckless now?”

“You’re in no place to criticize me for my decisions!” Yu Tong

lashed out.

She didn't give Mo Xi or others the opportunity to say more before suddenly pressing her hand onto her bracelet of holding. The next moment, several buckets of blood flew out of it and poured onto the ground beneath her.

In a flash, an intense, bloody reek filled the air, as a scarlet blood aura gradually emitted from within her.

Under the influence and control of her Blood Bead, the enormous amount of blood seeped into the ground and extended out in every direction like veins as they closed in on Zheng Bin and the others.

## Chapter 75: Early Detection

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After leaving the campsite, Nie Tian and Pan Tao randomly picked a direction and walked for a period of time before stopping.

Staring off into the distance, Pan Tao said, “If we want the food from the Mystic Mist Palace to last until the Secret Dimension Gate opens, everyone will have to go hungry in the following days. It’s partly our fault, too. We were just focused on getting here as quickly as possible, and tossed away a lot of food along the way.”

Smiling, Nie Tian said, “Well, actually it’s because of me. Before you guys showed up, Zheng Bin believed that their food supply was more than enough, so he let me have as much as I wanted. He never thought you’d be in such a sorry situation, and arrive empty-handed.”

Nie Tian didn’t have much of an opinion of Zheng Bin, either good or bad.

After spending a while with the trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect, he came to realize that the atmosphere among them was extremely harmonious under his leadership.

Moreover, Zheng Bin wasn’t a stingy man. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have accommodated Nie Tian’s request for such a large amount of food.

“Yep, although I haven’t worked with Zheng Bin before, I heard that his reputation was pretty good.” Pan Tao laughed. “Although,

he clearly doesn't think much of the two of us, considering that he agreed for us to leave the group."

"Hahaha, it's not that big a deal. As long as we can find things to eat and keep everyone from starving, it'll count as us repaying his kindness." With these words, Nie Tian gradually closed his eyes, and unleashed his powerful psychic awareness to detect the signs of life in the vicinity.

Pan Tao saw what Nie Tian was doing, and stopped talking.

A while later, Nie Tian opened his eyes and shook his head. "There aren't any living beings nearby. Let's switch to another location."

"Okay."

The two of them roamed in the vicinity of the Secret Dimension Gate. From time to time, Nie Tian would use his psychic power to scan the area for fluctuations of life.

Unfortunately, there seemed to be no spirit beasts in the vicinity.

They switched from place to place, searching for signs of life, but they still couldn't find anything.

Once again, Nie Tian probed about with his psychic power, eyes closed. It was at this point that he suddenly detected unusual fluctuations of Qi and blood coming from the deepest parts of the

earth.

He suddenly became enlivened, assuming that there was a spirit beast similar to the Lurker Lizard, hiding somewhere in the depths of the earth. He immediately gathered his psychic awareness and sent it underground to search for it.

As soon as he did, he found that there were countless blood streams slowly flowing deep under the ground they were standing on.

The strange thing was that he felt somehow familiar with those blood streams...

“They’re from Yu Tong!”

All of a sudden, his expression changed as he concentrated even harder to sense the movements in the earth.

He could clearly detect that there weren’t any soul fluctuations in the blood streams, yet they were extending slowly and furtively towards the place where Zheng Bin and the others were.

They interweaved with each other, forming a dense and enormous web that seemed to be able to trap all living beings.

His eyes snapped open as he turned to Pan Tao, who was glancing around to keep guard, and said, “Something’s wrong! There are countless blood streams flowing in the deepest parts of the earth! I

believe that those blood streams were released by Yu Tong! And their target is Zheng Bin and the others!”

“Countless blood streams from Yu Tong?” Surprised by Nie Tian’s words, Pan Tao started to ponder as his brow slowly furrowed.

Moments later, Pan Tao’s expression flickered as he exclaimed, “The Earth Web! It’s the Blood sect’s forbidden technique: Earth Web! People from the Blood sect and Ghost sect can’t be far from us! They’ve already locked onto us with the Blood Searching Compass! Damn! Nie Tian, we have to go back, now!”

Confused, Nie Tian asked, “What’s an Earth Web?”

“There’s no time for that,” Pan Tao replied. “We have to get back as soon as possible!”

Nie Tian was affected by Pan Tao’s nervousness and said, “Don’t tell them that I sensed the abnormality underground. Please help me keep it a secret.”

Pan Tao nodded. “I understand.”

Even before they entered the Green Illusion dimension, Pan Tao had guessed that it was because of some hidden agenda that An Shiyi arranged for a child from the Nie clan to participate in the trial with them.

After An Ying repeatedly implied for him and Zheng Rui to test out Nie Tian, he became even more certain about that.

However, deep down, he had already considered Nie Tian as an indispensable battle companion. In order to not lose Nie Tian, he knew perfectly well what to do.

Before long, the two returned to the area where everyone was gathered.

“Any findings? Did you find any spirit beasts?” Seeing that they returned so early, Han Xin from the Mystic Mist sect prompted the question in a ridiculing tone, “I’ve told you already. There simply aren’t any spirit beasts in the area. Yet, you had to go and put yourselves and everyone in danger. Are you happy now?”

“Shut up!” Pan Tao let out a cold shout.

Han Xin instantly exploded with anger. “Who are you talking to? We provided you with food and water. And now you’re yelling at me?!”

Many other trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect also sprung to their feet, glowering at Pan Tao, as if they were ready to fight the moment the situation worsened.

Zheng Bin’s expression turned grim. “Pan Tao, what are you doing? You should apologize to Han Xin!”

“If apologizing can solve the problem, then I’ll apologize!” With a dour expression, Pan Tao didn’t bother to look at Zheng Bin, but rather turned to An Ying and Jiang Lingzhu, and said, “We’re in big trouble. Not only are the Blood sect and Ghost sect nearby, they’ve also used the Blood sect’s forbidden technique, Earth Web!”

“What?!” Jiang Lingzhu blurted in astonishment. “The Earth Web!?”

“How could that be possible?!” An Ying exclaimed. “Yu Tong just entered the Lesser Heaven stage. She doesn’t have enough strength to use the Earth Web yet.”

Zheng Bin’s expression changed drastically, and he stopped speaking out for Han Xin. “The Blood sect’s forbidden technique, Earth Web?! Are you sure that it’s the Earth Web? How did you discover it?”

At that time, Nie Tian, who came back with Pan Tao, secretly grew worried.

As group leaders, Jiang Lingzhu, An Ying, and Zheng Bin were core disciples of the Cloudsoaring sect, Spiritual Treasure sect and Mystic Mist sect.

They had all learned about the Ghost sect and Blood sect’s forbidden techniques from their respective sect elders.



Obviously, they knew what the Earth Web meant for them.

Upon hearing that the Earth Web had been set up by the Blood Sect, their expressions all changed drastically. This was sufficient proof of how terrifying the Earth Web was.

“Pan Tao, are you sure that it’s the Earth Web?” An Ying asked with a straight face.

By this point, everyone, including Han Xin, who previously bickered with him, glanced over towards Pan Tao, faces pale with anxiety and terror.

Pan Tao glanced at Nie Tian. Seeing that Nie Tian’s face was calm as usual, without the slightest doubt, he nodded vigorously. “I’ll use my head to vouch for it!”

Once these words were uttered, An Ying’s doubts vanished. She immediately said, “We need to locate people from the Ghost sect and Blood sect before the Earth Web forms! We can’t just sit and wait for death!”

“That’s the only option!” Jiang Lingzhu agreed.

Soon, Zheng Bin also realized how dangerous the situation was, and nodded. “Everyone spread out and search for the traces of the Blood sect and Ghost sect. Once you have an idea of where they are, immediately shout out to inform the others. Since Yu Tong has only entered the Lesser Heaven stage recently, even with the

help of a powerful spiritual tool, the coverage of her Earth Web won't be very large!

“She's definitely not far from us! As long as we can locate her and attack her, and stop her from fully forming the Earth Web, then we'll be able to avoid being held down by it!”

An Ying said decisively, “Let's spread out and find them!”

“Nie Tian!” Pan Tao said. “You go with me. I've got a special tool that can detect the movements of the Earth Web! We have the highest chance of finding them!” With that, he suddenly bolted away, not wishing to waste even one second.

He knew very well that he had to separate Nie Tian from the others, so that Nie Tian wouldn't expose his magical sensing ability.

“Alright!” Nie Tian rushed out after him.

In a moment, the two of them were the first ones to run off into the distance.

“He's got a special tool...” Zheng Bin's expression flickered as an idea struck him. Then he called out, “Since he can locate them, there's no need for us to split up! Let's just follow them!”

“Let's go!”

As of this moment, trial takers from the three sects had all discarded their former differences, and stopped bothering about Pan Tao's unkind words. Like arrows, they shot towards the direction that Pan Tao and Nie Tian had left in.

It only took a while for Nie Tian to catch up with Pan Tao. Every once in awhile, he would release his psychic awareness to determine the source of the blood streams.

Pan Tao, on the other hand, kept calling out to the trial takers behind them, "Keep your distance from us! Your fleshy aura will disrupt my searching device!"

Upon hearing his words, the trial takers, who had been gaining on them, gradually slowed down their pace to keep a sizable distance from them.

After that, Nie Tian no longer worried about being discovered by the others. Using his psychic awareness to follow the blood streams, they gradually closed in on the source: Yu Tong.

## Chapter 76: The Blood Constraint!

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Yu Tong stood in the middle of the pile of dried up bones, holding the Blood Bead in her hand, casting her spell silently. A thick blood mist wreathed her curvaceous body.

Blood strings shot out in every direction from beneath her feet, spreading out into the blood mist around her, causing scarlet-colored ancient scripts to appear within the aura that had been enveloping her.

Moments ago, ten wooden barrels had flown out of her bracelet of holding, and had already been emptied onto the ground.

The fresh blood within those wooden barrels was from second grade spirit beasts, and had also been meticulously refined through the use of the Blood sect's secret magics.

Yu Tong used the Blood Bead to control the movement of the blood she had sent underground, compelling the blood streams to flow through the deepest part of the earth, towards the location of the Secret Dimension Gate.

Face serious, Mo Xi, together with five disciples of the Blood sect and Ghost sect, were waiting for her to fully form the Earth Web.

PUFF!

All of a sudden, Yu Tong, who was in the midst of casting her

spell, spit out a mouthful of fresh blood.

The moment the blood made contact with the blood mist that had been swirling around her, it seemed to have become weightless, floating in the midst of the blood mist.

One after another, the bloody characters were like shoals of flesh-eating fish that had sniffed out an bloody smell, converging and boring their way to the mouthful of fresh blood.

In a second, the blood became translucent and sparkling, like a blood diamond, emanating deadly but beautiful lights.

“Don’t push yourself too far, Yu Tong!” Mo Xi exclaimed anxiously.

Eyes narrowed, Yu Tong glanced coldly at Mo Xi with her devilish, bloody pupils, but didn’t open her mouth to speak.

WHOOSH!

The Blood Searching Compass suddenly flew out of her bracelet of holding, landing on the palm of her unoccupied hand.

A blood-colored aura emerged from the tips of her slender fingers, pouring into the Blood Searching Compass, lighting up its dark-red surface.

The blood spots, which represented the fluctuations of the flesh of living beings, were like stars in the night sky, sparkling into appearance on the compass one after the other.

Yu Tong's eyes gradually lay on the compass. Instantly, the expression on her incomparably gorgeous face changed drastically.

“They’re coming towards us!”

Hearing her words, every one of the Blood sect and Ghost sect disciples were seized with nervousness, and immediately looked towards the surface of the Blood Searching Compass.

Numerous blood spots were like tiny stars, slowly advancing on where they were standing.

“How did they find us?” Mo Xi asked angrily in a low voice.

A Blood sect disciple said anxiously, “Dammit! Senior martial sister is casting the spell, and now she’s reached the most crucial moment. She definitely cannot be disturbed!”

“I’m afraid there isn’t enough time for the Earth Web to fully form.”

Begrudging hatred could be seen in Yu Tong's eyes.

After a moment of hesitation, she took out three thumb-sized

medicinal pills from her bracelet of holding.

The color of the pills was dark-red, just like the Blood Searching Compass. The moment they showed up, the bloody scent surrounding Yu Tong became even more pronounced.

“Blood Strengthening Pills!” Mo Xi was shocked.

“No!” Other Blood sect disciples yelled to stop her.

However, before they could do anything about it, Yu Tong had already swallowed them with lightning speed.

Suddenly, something sinister could be seen on her beautiful face.

At that moment, the Blood Bead she held tightly in her hand, as well as the blood she had spat out, simultaneously released an astonishing, bright, blood-colored light.

“We can only strike in advance!” Yu Tong bellowed, wrath filling her voice.

...

Also at this moment, Nie Tian retracted his psychic awareness and quietly pointed in a direction for Pan Tao. “They’re over there. I can’t be wrong.”

Pan Tao felt assured before asking in a low voice, “No need to hide it from the others?”

Nie Tian briefly nodded his head.

Pan Tao stopped for a moment, as he turned his head around, facing Zheng Bin, Jiang Lingzhu, and the others, and then pointed towards the direction that Nie Tian had indicated, shouting at the top of his lungs, “I’m certain that they are over there!”

“Hurry!”

“Go stop the witch’s spell!”

“We can’t let her finish the Earth Web!”

Everyone shouted out together, with the loudest being Zheng Bin, who couldn’t wait any longer and suddenly surpassed Pan Tao and Nie Tian. He was the first to dash towards the location of Yu Tong.

Li Xi from the Mystic Mist sect called out energetically, “Kill the witch while she’s casting the spell! As long as she’s dead, the others won’t be a threat!”

After Yu Tong’s location had been pinpointed, everyone grew excited, believing that as long as they could seize the opportunity to kill Yu Tong, they would then be able to eliminate the other Ghost sect and Blood sect disciples.



As of this moment, the trial had already lost its priority. As long as they could kill Yu Tong, Mo Xi, and the others, they would definitely receive handsome rewards from the four sects.

With bloodshot eyes, everyone shouted, “Kill them! Kill them all!”

FIZZ! FIZZ!

All of a sudden, strange sounds resounded from the depths of the ground.

In the next moment, countless blood strings, each one as thin as a hair, pierced out of the ground.

It seemed as if rivers of blood were flowing out from under their feet. The pungent smell of blood suddenly pervaded the air.

A strange, bloody magnetic field enveloped everyone as soon as those scarlet blood strings shot out from the earth.

It was at that moment that Nie Tian sensed that his blood seemed to have stopped flowing.

A strange, indescribably painful feeling burst out of every part of his body, making him feel as though he had sustained a heavy blow and couldn't move a bit.

Astonished, he looked over towards An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, Pan Tao, and the others. Their faces all changed drastically as panic filled their eyes.

He instantly realized that everyone on his side was just like him, influenced by the bloody magnetic field and held down by a strange force!

FIZZ! FIZZ!

One after another, numerous blood strings pierced towards everyone, like sharp steel needles.

Li Xi was the one who yelled the loudest. Nie Tian looked over and saw him staring at the approaching blood strings with wide eyes and a flushed face, yet completely incapable of moving.

PUFF! PUFF! PUFF!

Three strands of blood penetrated into his chest, and shot out of his back.

Li Xi's wide eyes lost their radiance as he died instantly.

FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ!

A dozen more blood strings shot out from the earth, jabbing

towards Nie Tian's abdomen.

“NO!”

Nie Tian let out an explosive roar, like a wild beast, and his heart, which had previously seemed to stop beating, finally began to pump violently again.

Moments later, he discovered that his previously stopped blood flow had returned to normal.

SHEW!

With a swift shift of his body, he narrowly dodged the blood strings that were piercing towards him.

PUFF! PUFF! PUFF!

After his narrow escape from death, Nie Tian glanced around and saw three more disciples of the Mystic Mist sect pierced through the torso by the blood strings.

“The witch has unleashed the Blood Constraint in advance!”

Eyes extremely wide and red, Zheng Bin roared out as though he had gone mad, while tears seemed to be splashing out from his eyes.

After breaking free from the strange forces that had been affecting his blood, Nie Tian suddenly heard Jiang Miao's cry. He turned to his side and saw four strands of scarlet light stabbing towards the back of Jiang Miao's neck.

“S-save me!”

Without thinking, Nie Tian dashed to Jiang Miao's side at the fastest speed possible, and pulled her away before the strands of scarlet light could pierce into her neck.

“Save those around you!” Jiang Lingzhu cried out.

An Ying, Pan Tao, and Zheng Bin, who had also recovered their ability to move, rushed through the battlefield to help their fellow fighters to break free from the Blood Constraint.

After saving Jiang Miao, Nie Tian studied the battlefield with rapt attention and a grim face, and found that everyone who had reached the ninth level of Qi Refining had already managed to break free from the Blood Constraint.

He was the only one who was at the eighth level that managed to struggle free.

In a flash, Li Xi and three other trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect had died by the countless blood strings.

Only five of the Mystic Mist sect disciples were lucky enough to

survive with Zheng Bin, An Ying, and Jiang Lingzhu's help.

With a gaze filled with praise, An Ying looked deeply at Pan Tao, and said, "Pan Tao! Your judgment was correct! This really is the Blood sect's forbidden technique: Earth Web! We're lucky you detected it beforehand! Otherwise, if the Earth Web was fully formed, none of us would be able to escape from the Blood Constraint!"

It was exactly because the Earth Web was not yet fully condensed that Nie Tian, Jiang Lingzhu, and others had only been affected by it for a moment.

Once it was fully formed, everyone who was enveloped within it would be bound by it permanently, except those whose cultivation level was higher than the person who had cast the spell.

However, the one who had cast this spell was the witch, Yu Tong, a Qi warrior at the Lesser Heaven stage!

In the entire Green Illusion dimension, she possessed the highest cultivation base. Not a single person was a match for her, let alone higher than her.

This meant that once the Earth Web was completely formed, everyone enveloped within would die tragically by her hands!

"Thank you for saving me again," Jiang Miao said timidly.

Just as Nie Tian was about to reply, An Ying yelled, “Those who have escaped from the Blood Constraint, help people around you. The steel-needle-like blood strings haven’t disappeared!”

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Just as she had expected, the strands of blood-colored light, after missing their targets, circled back and locked onto new targets, stabbing once more towards the crowd.

The sky was filled with the interweaving scarlet strings. They took the shape of a blood net in one second, and then spread out, turning into countless blood needles in the next second.

“Yee?!”

All their attention concentrated, everyone was preparing to defend against the attacks of the blood strings, when their expressions suddenly flickered.

FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ!

To their surprise, all of the countless blood strings took a sudden turn and headed towards Nie Tian.

At this moment, it seemed that Nie Tian had become their one and only target.

Everyone was still poised and uptight, only to be flabbergasted by the scene in front of their eyes.

They didn't understand why Nie Tian was such a big threat to the extent that he had actually attracted the raging attacks of the all the blood strings to himself.

“What... What did he do to Yu Tong?”

Knowing that Yu Tong was the controller of the scarlet blood strings, the same question simultaneously surfaced in the hearts of everyone present.

## Chapter 77: The Insane Yu Tong!

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As the sky-filling, scarlet blood strings pierced madly towards Nie Tian, Yu Tong suddenly let out a hysterical screech.

“Nie Tian! You’re DEAD!!!”

Knowing that her position had already been exposed, Yu Tong acted even more boldly, and with a screech, she vented out the enormous hatred she had towards him.

By now, Nie Tian and the others were only a few hundred meters away from her.

Those who had escaped the attacks of the blood threads suddenly experienced excruciating pain in their eardrums, as if they had been stabbed by Yu Tong’s screech. Their expressions flickered as they looked at Nie Tian with an extremely strange gaze.

Jiang Lingzhu was confused. “What did this guy do to piss off Yu Tong so much that she abandoned everyone else just to kill him?”

By this point, all the trial takers who hadn’t reached the ninth level of Qi Refining had also broken free from the Blood Constraint.

Jiang Miao’s blood flow had also returned to normal.



Nie Tian cursed inwardly, “God damn! This woman has gone insane!”

Seeing the innumerable blood strings shifting between different patterns, while simultaneously chasing after him and him alone, he could only move as fast as he could to dodge them.

The sky-filling blood strings were like sharks that had caught a whiff of the smell of blood, swimming about in midair and chasing after Nie Tian.

The other trial takers, on the other hand, had been blankly staring at Nie Tian, who was constantly dodging the blood strings that were hot on his tail.

Jiang Lingzhu was the first to snap back to reality and said, “What are we waiting for? Come on, we’ve got to help him!”

Upon these words, all the trial takers rushed to Nie Tian’s side, and made every effort to cut the blood strings.

However, they were so numerous and so tough that even though everyone drew power from their spiritual tools, it was still hard to cut even one blood thread.

On the other side, Mo Xi from the Ghost sect called out with a dour expression on his face, “Yu Tong, what are you doing?!”

One of the Blood sect disciples stared at Yu Tong as if she were a

ghost. “Senior martial sister, what’s happening? I’ve never seen you hate a person so much! You haven’t suffered a backlash from the Earth Web and fallen into a state of Qi deviation, have you? Using all the blood to build up an Earth Web just to attack a single person. Isn’t it a bit irrational?”

The other disciples from the Blood sect and Ghost sect also felt puzzled, looking over towards Yu Tong, whose eyes were now filled with insanity.

They couldn’t fathom what Nie Tian had done to anger Yu Tong so much that the always rational Yu Tong turned into such a mad and violent person?

“It’s my problem! I don’t have to explain it to you!” Yu Tong clenched her teeth, the bloody light in her eyes blazing like a torch.

With these words, she took out another two Blood Strengthening Pills from her bracelet of holding, and recklessly swallowed them to stimulate her potential.

“You’re insane!” Mo Xi’s face turned pale with fright.

He knew perfectly clear that Blood Strengthening Pills could give a short and violent boost to a Blood sect disciple’s strength, however the burden it placed on the body was too great. Every Blood Strengthening Pill she consumed would inflict a huge amount of damage to herself.

In order to form the Earth Web as soon as possible, Yu Tong had already swallowed three Blood Strengthening Pills, which was the limit of a Lesser Heaven stage Qi warrior.

With another two, it wouldn't be long before she sustained severe damage and collapsed, losing all battle power.

Admittedly, the Blood Strengthening Pills could enhance her Qi and power as well as the potential of her fleshy body to an astonishing extent, in a very short period time. However, the price... would be half a year of secluded meditation!

As of this moment, Mo Xi gradually realized why Yu Tong had insisted on fighting despite their significant disadvantage in numbers. The reason she spared no cost to gather power and form the Earth Web was definitely not just to fulfill the trial mission.

Her true motive was to kill Nie Tian!

The trial and the mission had already lost all meaning. The only thing in her head now was the desire to slaughter Nie Tian!

“Nie Tian!” With a loud and furious roar, Mo Xi bolted forward from Yu Tong's side. “All of you, stay here and protect Yu Tong!”

FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ! FIZZ!

Countless scarlet blood threads flew about in the empty sky, like blood-colored meteors that plummeted towards Nie Tian.

The dreadful smell of blood suddenly surged up in the air around Nie Tian, making him want to vomit with every breath he took.

At the same time, a bloody magnetic field seemed to have gradually formed again, identical to the previous one.

“It’s the Blood Constraint again?”

Nie Tian’s expression changed slightly as he realized that Yu Tong had given up on binding everyone with the Earth Web. Instead, she was now concentrating all of her power on him alone.

Apparently, Yu Tong no longer cared about the others’ lives; she only wished to kill Nie Tian before he could leave the Green Illusion dimension.

Jiang Lingzhu brandished her thin, dark-golden sword, slashing apart one blood string after another as she tried to approach Nie Tian. “Nie Tian! Be careful! That witch can’t use the Blood Constraint to bind all of us since it wasn’t completely formed. However, if she uses the Blood Constraint on you alone, it will still work.”

However, there were simply too many blood strings chasing after Nie Tian. Even adding in An Ying and the others, the blood strings that they had destroyed weren’t even ten percent of the total number.

WHOOSH!

In an instant, the spread-out blood strings once again interweaved with one another, morphing into a gigantic scarlet net.

The intersection point of the blood strings released brilliant, blood-colored light, and when the enormous scarlet net swooped towards Nie Tian, scarlet inscriptions appeared inside the mesh of the net.

It was at this very moment that Yu Tong bellowed from hundreds of meters away, her voice full of hatred, “Blood Constraint!!!”

Nie Tian, who was attempting to escape from the scarlet net, suddenly felt an abnormal change in his blood flow. Instantly, he was held down where he stood, no longer able to move a single step.

The scarlet web of blood seized the opportunity and swooped down, wrapping Nie Tian up.

Affected by the Blood Constraint, Nie Tian could only watch the net as it trapped him.

In the next moment, a heart-wrenching pain spread out from every single piece of flesh on him.

He instantly realized that the giant net was contracting

unceasingly, as the numerous blood strings that constituted the net began to slice into his skin and flesh.

It felt like innumerable arrows piercing his heart. He could actually feel the blood strings cutting into his flesh and penetrating his veins.

His blood was being pulled at by a great suction force, streaming into those blood threads.

It seemed as if the countless blood strings had turned into bloodsucking leeches, drinking his blood greedily, and his robust physique gradually shriveled due to massive blood loss.

Pan Tao let out an explosive shout. “Nie Tian!”

As An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, and the others rushed over to help him, they were met with frantic attacks from the scattered blood strings that roamed around him.

After tearing apart a few blood strings, Zheng Bin suddenly stopped.

“He’s totally trapped this time! Yu Tong is using the Blood Sect’s blood refining art to refine his blood!”

Eyes fill with pity, he stared at Nie Tian and said calmly, “He’s dead for sure. With our cultivation base, we won’t be able to stop the blood refining spell. Instead of wasting our energy on him, we

might as well track down the source of the spell, and kill that witch as quickly as we can, to stop her from hurting others.”

Without waiting for the others to give their consent, Zheng Bin instructed the survivors from the Mystic Mist sect, “Follow me! Let’s take advantage of this moment and kill that witch to avenge Nie Tian. Get her while she’s distracted from using the blood refining spell!”

With these words, he abandoned Nie Tian and charged forward.

All the trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect took orders from him, thus upon hearing his orders, they could only look sadly towards Nie Tian before dashing off.

“Help him!” Pan Tao cried. “He can be saved!”

However, Zheng Bin and the others from the Mystic Mist sect simply ignored him.

Even An Ying looked deeply at Nie Tian, who was gradually wasting away, before shaking her head. “Zheng Bin is right,” she said softly. “Nie Tian... won’t make it. We shouldn’t waste too much energy on him. Yu Tong is the crucial factor that determines whether we win or lose.”

With these words, she also stopped chopping at the blood strings, and dashed after the Mystic Mist sect disciples.

Seeing her leaving, Zheng Rui also departed without uttering a word.

Only Jiang Lingzhu, Nie Xian, Jiang Miao, and the outraged Pan Tao stayed by Nie Tian's side, sparing no effort to slash the scarlet blood strings, still hoping to save his life.



## Chapter 78: Begrudging!

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Unfortunately, the unyielding effort of Pan Tao and the other three didn't seem to be of much help to Nie Tian.

The countless blood strings were packed like dense, tenacious weeds, and they were also incomparably tough. Even if Zheng Bin and the others had helped, it would still be hard to cut apart all of them.

Besides, seeing that Nie Tian had no hope of surviving, Zheng Bin and the others had already left decisively.

Wrapped up in the Earth Web, Nie Tian was gradually drying up. Even his pupils... gradually turned empty and dark.

The blood strings, on the contrary, seemed to become increasingly thicker and brighter after absorbing more and more of his blood.

“Save him!” Jiang Miao sobbed. “Hurry and save him!” Her sharp sword slashed through the air as she spared not the slightest effort to cut apart the blood threads.

Nie Xian, who was also from the Nie clan, didn't say a word. His expression was grim as he hacked away like a machine.

From the look of it, he also believed that Nie Tian didn't have much time left, and he was only doing his best clear his conscience

and remain guilt-free in the future.

Meanwhile, Jiang Lingzhu's face was filled with pity. In her opinion, if the outstanding Nie Tian died in the Green Illusion dimension, it would be a huge waste.

She planned to bring out all she had, and leave everything else to the heavens. Truthfully, she didn't hold her hopes very high either.

After all, she knew how terrifying the Blood sect's blood refining art was.

It was at this moment that the shouts of An Ying and Zheng Bin echoed out from not far away, as they met the angry Mo Xi halfway along their charge towards Yu Tong.

“Mo Xi!”

“You actually dare to come over!!”

“Kill Mo Xi first!”

The two parties immediately engaged in fierce battle.

Hearing the sounds of the battle, Jiang Lingzhu frowned and looked deeply at Nie Tian. With a sigh, she said, “We really are losing him.”

By this time, Nie Tian already looked horrifically shriveled, as if he had been completely drained of blood and liquid.

At some point along the line, he had closed his eyes, and had even stopped breathing. Other than the faint heartbeat echoing out from his chest, he was no different from a dead man.

The blood strings, however, grew increasingly thicker and more radiant.

Face dour, Jiang Lingzhu shook her head. “Pan Tao, let’s not wait any more. I also want to save him, but he’s... he’s dying. With our strength, we can’t stop Yu Tong’s blood refining art. If you really want to save him, kill Yu Tong, the spellcaster. That’s the only way. If we can kill Yu Tong soon enough, perhaps... he’ll still have a chance to live.”

With bloodshot eyes, Pan Tao gritted his teeth and yelled, “Yu Tong! Let’s kill her!”

“Yeah, let’s go!” Nie Xian exclaimed.

Jiang Lingzhu also nodded her head. Finally, she chose not to waste more time, and led Pan Tao and Nie Xian to join Zheng Bin and the others.

By doing that, Jiang Lingzhu had actually declared Nie Tian’s death in her heart.

She knew perfectly well that Nie Tian might only have half a minute to live, and there was absolutely no way that they could kill the Blood sect's Yu Tong in such a short period of time.

After Pan Tao, Nie Xian, and Jiang Lingzhu left, Jiang Miao was the only one who stayed by Nie Tian's side.

Jiang Miao had also stopped cutting away the blood strings. She just stood close to Nie Tian, trying her best to refrain from sobbing, as she stared blankly towards him.

She knew that her strength was limited. Even if she followed Pan Tao and the others, she probably wouldn't be able to provide much help.

She might as well just gaze at Nie Tian quietly before he died.

But then, Jiang Miao suddenly let out a soft cry, and covered her mouth. "Ah!"

After everyone had left, Nie Tian's eyes snapped open, and the desire to live suddenly shot out from within them!

THUMP THUMP!

His originally extremely weak heartbeat suddenly grew incomparably vigorous, and the desire to live in his eyes gradually

turned into begrudging violence!

He was unwilling to die in such a place!

THUMP THUMP! THUMP THUMP THUMP!

As Nie Tian's heartbeat became increasingly strong, Jiang Miao watched him open his mouth, as if he were roaring soundlessly.

Wrath filled his face, as he seemed to be forcing something inside of him to burst out.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

For no apparent reason, the blood strings that had cut into Nie Tian's flesh suddenly started to twitch.

After absorbing Nie Tian's blood, they had become powerful and thick, but now they were shrinking down at a speed visible to the naked eye!

Nie Tian's shriveled body seemed like an inflating balloon, expanding rapidly!

ROOOOAR!

A berserk howl escaped from Nie Tian's mouth. He threw his

head back and inhaled air in large gasps, as if he was going to swallow the entire sky into his belly.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

The mesh of the Blood Web which had trapped him, suddenly split apart, and the blood strings that had cut into his flesh seemed to have detected something, and attempted to retract from his body.

“This is....”

Jiang Miao, who was staring blankly at Nie Tian, didn't know what was happening. It seemed like those blood threads were scared of something.

Moments ago, the blood strings covering Nie Tian's entire body had been as thick as a finger, but now they suddenly shriveled down to their original size, and became as thin as a hair.

SHEW!

A blood string that had been strangling Nie Tian seemed to be pulled by a mysterious force, and suddenly disappeared into his neck!

Shock stretched across Jiang Miao's face.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Seconds later, more blood strings, that had originally cut into Nie Tian's skin, disappeared into his flesh.

It was as if countless invisible hands were pulling every single one of the blood strings into Nie Tian's body.

Meanwhile, Jiang Miao was taken aback by the incredible scene, as she wondered what was happening to Nie Tian.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

The scarlet blood strings that hadn't cut into Nie Tian madly twisted while letting out shrieking sounds, as if they were trying to break away from Nie Tian.

At that moment, the previously savage and terrifying blood strings seemed to have seen a ghost, as they only wished to flee.

However, Nie Tian was still roaring and taking in large gulps of air.

With his inhalations, the blood strings that were attempting to break free from him seemed to be forcibly held down by an enormous magnet, and were stuck firmly to his body.

They seemed to be continuously tightening under the formidable

suction, as they gradually cut into Nie Tian's skin.

However, after piercing into Nie Tian's skin, the blood strings seemed to slowly melt down and merge with his flesh.

The blood threads, which had previously bared their fangs and brandished their claws as they madly attacked everyone, were now screaming as they tried to struggle free at all costs.

However, as Nie Tian breathed, the blood threads seemed to be ruthlessly sucked inward and absorbed into his body, one by one.

Very quickly, not only did Nie Tian's body return to normal, but he also glowed with a red light, and seemed even stronger than before.

At the same time, an intense bloody scent spread out from him, making Jiang Miao, who was standing beside him, tremble in fear.

"What... What happened to you?" Jiang Miao asked timidly.

At this moment, a scarlet, bloody aura was unleashed from Nie Tian's eyes, which condensed and took form of two bloody, sharp swords.

He glanced at Jiang Miao and blurted, "Guard me and don't tell anyone about what you saw."



“Oh, okay.” Jiang Miao replied hastily.

WHOOH! Nie Tian took a deep breath.

The last remaining blood strings around him were pulled into his body and forcibly absorbed.

By this point, the blood strings that Yu Tong had refined with the second grade spirit beasts' blood, had been completely absorbed into Nie Tian's flesh.

POOH!

It was also at that moment that Yu Tong, who was being guarded by the Ghost sect and Blood sect, suddenly coughed up a mouthful of blood, and passed out.

Upon seeing that Yu Tong went unconscious, the disciples from the Ghost sect and Blood sect immediately gave up on the idea of continuing to stay in the Green Illusion dimension, and their expressions changed drastically.

“Senior martial sister!”

“Yu Tong suffered from the backlash of the forbidden technique, Earth Web!”

“Dammit! From now on, she'll be of no help at all, and in fact, a

big burden!”

“By now, our mission in the Green Illusion dimension has truly come to an end.”

“Tell Mo Xi to retreat! Otherwise, we’re all going to die here!”

# Chapter 79: You're Still Alive?!

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The moment they saw their strongest leader, Yu Tong, pass out, the disciples from the Ghost Sect and Blood Sect lost their fighting spirit.

They also shouted loudly to inform Mo Xi to return.

At this time, Mo Xi was still under siege, with numerous sinister and terrifying ghost shadows hovering around him, as he continuously attacked An Ying and the others.

Mo Xi originally planned to break through the defenses of An Ying and the others, and then kill Nie Tian. However, he quickly found out that he couldn't possibly accomplish the job single-handedly.

When he heard the urgent cries coming from behind him, he realized that Yu Tong had suffered from a backlash, and could no longer help them secure victory.

As a matter of fact, he had long since realized that, regardless of whether Yu Tong could kill Nie Tian or not, she wouldn't be able to quickly recover after consuming five Blood Strengthening Pills, and would inevitably drag them down.

"I'll kill you all next time!" Mo Xi bellowed, causing the sinister ghouls around him to suddenly expand, split up, and bite towards Zheng Bin and the others.

Mo Xi's figure flickered quickly, as if he had morphed into a weightless ghost, floating rapidly back to where he had come from.

When he rejoined his group, he saw that a disciple of the Blood Sect had already hefted Yu Tong onto his back.

Without even the slightest hesitation, Mo Xi gave the order and led the remaining disciples from the Ghost sect and Blood sect towards the glacier area.

“Let's go! “

Soon after he was gone, the ferocious ghouls that had been biting towards the crowd gradually turned fuzzy, and seconds later, vanished into thin air.

“Chase them down!” Zheng Bin said, gritting his teeth.

An Ying also called out, “The witch from the Blood sect must be in trouble. If not, Mo Xi would never retreat! Let's take the opportunity and kill them while Yu Tong can't fight, and avenge our fallen teammates!”

“Kill them all!”

They soon reached an agreement and ran after Mo Xi and his group, hoping to annihilate all the disciples of the Ghost sect and

Blood sect in the Green Illusion dimension.

On the other hand, Jiang Miao was still staring at Nie Tian with a complicated look in her eyes.

Wordlessly, Nie Tian sat down on the ground, and closed his eyes. In the next moment, raging fluctuations of Qi and blood emerged from within him.

His skin continuously emanated a bloody aura, which was like a dense mist of blood that enveloped him, making him appear somewhat unfathomable.

He almost looked like a balloon, constantly inflating and deflating. He would grow large in one second, and shrink down in the next.

Jiang Miao had no clue about what was happening to Nie Tian, but she knew for a fact that even Yu Tong's Earth Web had failed to kill him.

Nie Tian, who had been deemed doomed by An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, and the others, was now breathing evenly with a heartbeat that was stronger than ever.

He was actually emanating a life force that was even more vigorous than before he was trapped by the Earth Web!

“Such a strange guy...” Jiang Miao whispered.

At this time, Nie Tian suddenly felt incredibly hot, as if he had turned into a furnace. Every single meridian and vein inside of him seemed to be violently expanding and contracting.

Even he didn't understand what was going on. He only knew that when he had been on the verge of being drained of all his blood by those scarlet blood strings, his heartbeat suddenly accelerated.

And at that moment, he had begrudgingly attempted to reverse the desperate situation by forcibly stopping the outflow of his blood.

He had actually done it!

When his heart began pounding in a violent and unfathomable way, he suddenly sensed that an unknown force had surged up within his heart.

The moment that force was unleashed, his blood, together with the blood that he had absorbed from the scarlet blood strings, seemed to have suddenly reached a resonance with his heart.

It was at that time the blood that had previously been sucked out of him was pulled fiercely back into his veins.

Not only that, even the scarlet blood strings themselves were also dragged into his body.

He wasn't aware of how much Yu Tong had gone through to create the scarlet blood strings. She used the Blood sect's unique Blood Refining Technique to refine the blood of a second grade spirit beast, and after several days of unrelenting effort, she eventually formed a deadly weapon that carried rich Qi and blood.

He only knew that those countless blood strings contained copious Qi and blood, which was currently being forcibly channeled into his veins, and merging with his blood!

As he took multiple deep breaths, his blood vessels expanded, and his body bulked up, which seemed to have been caused by the fact that his blood had greedily absorbed the blood and Qi in those scarlet blood strings.

Soon, his body seemed to have turned into a giant melting pot, and started to refine the considerable amount of blood and Qi contained in the blood of the second grade spirit beast. After numerous rounds of refinement, they completely merged with his own blood, and started to nourish his body.

During this process, he used his psychic awareness to examine himself, and found that some mysterious, unknown symbols were flashing within his blood. However, only a second later, they disappeared.

Then he could faintly sense that his blood was completely out of the ordinary!

However, the secrets within seemed to be concealed extremely

deeply, and wouldn't be unveiled unless Nie Tian was in a desperate situation.

His cultivation base was still poor, and he was still far from strong enough to explore the secrets in his blood.

From the look of it, what had happened inside of him was merely the first step in unlocking the secrets inside of him.

Even though he harbored doubts in his heart, he didn't interfere with the unusual occurrence inside of him. Instead, he opened up his mind and let his body operate in such a unique way.

Meanwhile, he himself seemed to have become an outsider, as he used his soul to quietly observe what was going on.

After an unknown period of time, he gradually realized that the blood and Qi that had originated from the blood strings had completely disappeared into his blood.

His exceptionally fast heartbeat returned to normal, and he no longer released a misty, bloody aura.

He secretly examined himself again, discovering that the blood that was flowing inside of him had already calmed down, and he no longer experienced any anomalies.

The spiritual sea in his dantian hadn't changed at all due to the fact that it received none of the energy that had lay within the



scarlet blood strings.

Neither had his psychic strength become enhanced because of it. However, he knew that something had changed in his blood.

Only, he couldn't tell what had changed after his heartbeat returned to normal.

After another thorough examination, he was convinced that everything was back on track, so then he opened his eyes.

Jiang Miao was staring at him, confusion and curiosity written across her face. "You're finally awake!" It seemed that she was waiting for him to give a reasonable explanation.

"Thank you for guarding me," he said with a smile.

Jiang Miao was somehow embarrassed. "It's only fair for me to do that. You saved me twice, yet I did nothing of the kind. The only thing I could do was to stay by your side and watch over you. I thought..."

She was going to say, I thought you wouldn't make it, and only wished to have one more glance of you before you died. However, seeing how radiant Nie Tian was now, like nothing had ever happened, she snapped her mouth shut.

It was only at this point that Nie Tian took a serious look at Jiang Miao for the first time.

She had a baby face, and a pair of big bright eyes. Her garments were dark green, and she always sounded timid when she spoke, as if she were a rabbit that might be scared off at any moment.

Jiang Miao's appearance was only slightly above average, not as outstanding as An Ying and Jiang Lingzhu. However, she was very good-natured, unlike the other two, who always hid their intentions.

Although Jiang Miao was probably older than him by a year, Nie Tian couldn't help but view her as an innocent little sister.

"It's all because of the different living environments..." he sighed inwardly.

Ever since he was little, he had always lived under the shadow of the internal struggles of the clan. He was there when Nie Donghai lost his power; he knew how much his loving aunt had suffered; he pulled through when Nie Hong, Nie Yuan, and other clan members picked on him...

Compared to his peers, he was much more mature. He had long since come to understand that Nie Donghai and Nie Qian had placed great hopes on him.

From the start, he had always worked hard when no one was watching, silently harboring the hope that he could cure his grandfather's injury and seek justice for his aunt one day.

Jiang Miao, on the other hand, had been a flower raised in a greenhouse, who had always been cherished and protected by everyone, and had never experienced the ugly side of human nature.

To her, the Green Illusion dimension trial was the biggest blow she had received in her entire life.

Her cozy environment of the past had turned her into a sheep. Perhaps she would gradually change after the trial and learn how dangerous the world really was.

Nie Tian weighed over his choice of words before calmly saying, "I'm fine. It seems that the witch lacked power at the crucial moment, which caused her to suffer from a backlash. And then, the blood that was originally sucked out of me suddenly returned. So I used my own method to slowly channel it back into my limbs. I'm fully recovered now."

Jiang Miao nodded. "Oh, it's good that you're fine."

However, she knew very well that the explanation Nie Tian had given was absolutely not the truth.

Even though she was convinced that he was hiding something, and was extremely curious about what it was, she chose to be smart and not inquire further.

The two of them chatted there, waiting for An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, and the others to return.

After a long time passed, Pan Tao, An Ying, and the others appeared on the distant horizon.

Pan Tao caught sight of him from hundreds of meters away, and immediately let out an incredulous shout.

“Nie Tian! You’re still alive?!”

# Chapter 80: The Trial Ends

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“He’s still alive?!!”

Zheng Bin stood there, staring aghast at Nie Tian.

An Ying and Jiang Lingzhu seemed as if they had seen a ghost, and could scarcely believe their own eyes.

The Lesser Heaven stage Yu Tong had clearly used the Blood sect’s forbidden technique, Earth Web, to trap Nie Tian and start to refine his blood.

When they left, Nie Tian was already on the verge of dying. In fact, he hadn’t even been breathing. The only thing that was standing between him and death’s door was his weakening heartbeat.

How could Nie Tian have survived a situation like that?!

Every one of them found it hard to believe.

Pan Tao was the first to rush to Nie Tian’s side. He circled around Nie Tian a few times, examining him carefully. After confirming that there was nothing wrong with him, he punched his shoulder heartily and blurted, “You little brat, how did you survive?!”

That was the the question that everyone wanted to ask.

At that time, everyone who had run after the people from the Ghost sect and the Blood sect had returned to Nie Tian's side, and were staring at him with eyes wide, waiting for him to give an explanation.

Nie Tian forced a laugh and said, "The witch proved to be her own undoing."

"What do you mean?" asked Pan Tao.

"She seemed to have suffered from a backlash when she was casting the blood refining technique." Nie Tian's expression was the same as ever. With a calm tone, he continued, "If she had managed to pull through, every drop of my blood would have been drained and refined. However, using the Earth Web with her Lesser Heaven cultivation base seems to be a bit beyond her.

"I sensed that when she was refining my fresh blood, something suddenly went wrong, and then she immediately lost all power.

"Since she could no longer continue with her spell, the blood that had been removed from my body gradually flowed back inside of me. Those countless scarlet blood strings also exploded into pieces, turning into a bloody mist as they slowly dissipated."

As Nie Tian spoke, Jiang Miao, who was standing next to him, had a subtle, strange look in her eyes, since this explanation of his was clearly different from the one he had given her.

According to him, those scarlet blood strings had exploded, but Jiang Miao had clearly watched as the numerous blood strings, which contained rich blood and Qi, had actually disappeared into him, where they seemed to have been refined by Nie Tian.

Fortunately, Jiang Miao harbored gratitude towards him, and thus didn't expose his secrets.

After he gave the explanation, thoughtful expressions could be seen on everyone's faces. Some believed him, while the others... secretly doubted the authenticity of the words. Among that latter group were An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, Pan Tao, and Zheng Bin.

Those who truly understood the profound mysteries of the Blood sect's blood refinement technique all knew that once the technique was started, even if Yu Tong had indeed suffered from a backlash, it still wouldn't stop.

Even if Yu Tong had died, the blood refinement technique would still last long enough for Nie Tian to die tragically due to excessive blood loss.

At the very least, it was impossible for the fresh blood that had been previously extracted from Nie Tian to flow back on its own.

In short, it was definitely impossible for him to have come out unscathed. Even if he somehow survived, he shouldn't be as radiant as he was now.

Seeing that everyone remained silent, with some of them looking at him with puzzled expressions, Nie Tian hurriedly changed the subject. “How about you guys? Did you catch up to them and kill them all?”

Pan Tao smiled bitterly. “No. Mo Xi, the witch, and two others escaped. We chased them for a while and killed three of the rear guards.

“The weird thing is that Mo Xi and the others seemed to have suddenly disappeared.

“If we could have killed Mo Xi and that witch, at least we would be able to justify ourselves to our elders after we leave the Green Illusion dimension.” With that, he sighed regretfully.

Yu Tong sustained severe injuries, leaving Mo Xi as the only powerful enemy, but still they failed to take them out in spite of that. This left them all with a sour taste in their mouths.

The others also felt that they were useless, thus no one spoke to defend themselves.

Finally, An Ying spoke up. “It’s about time to go. Let’s head to the Secret Dimension Gate. According to my calculations, the trial is going to end soon. We’ll only need to rough it out for a few more days. Let’s feast when we’re out of the Green Illusion dimension.”



Everyone nodded in assent.

It was at this point that Zheng Bin suddenly turned to Nie Tian and said, “We... thought you’d die for sure, and only then did we leave. We didn’t know you could make it. Otherwise, we would have stayed and helped you.”

An Ying, Jiang Lingzhu, and Nie Xian also looked at him with apologetic looks on their faces.

Nie Tian, on the other hand, didn’t take it seriously. He knew that Zheng Bin and the others’ decision was a wise one. If not for his inexplicable uniqueness, it would have been absolutely impossible for him to survive.

They knew nothing about it, therefore abandoning a doomed person and trying to turn the situation around by killing Yu Tong wasn’t wrong in the slightest.

“It’s nothing.” Nie Tian said, smiling. “I won’t blame you guys. You did nothing wrong.”

Pan Tao patted him on his shoulder and amiably said, “It’s good that you survived. Haven’t you become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect yet, you little punk?”

“No, I haven’t,” Nie Tian said truthfully. “My cultivation base isn’t good enough yet.”

Pan Tao nodded and chuckled, a meaningful look in his eyes.

Jiang Lingzhu was sizing Nie Tian up as she listened in on Nie Tian and Pan Tao's conversation. Her expression flickered, as though she had understood the meaning behind Pan Tao's words. She instantly said in a loud voice, "Don't even think about trying to recruit Nie Tian! Pan Tao, let me assure you, Nie Tian is joining the Cloudsoaring sect, if not sooner, then definitely later. You'd better give up your little scheme!"

Pan Tao rubbed his nose. "Your sect sets the rules and insists that disciples from the subordinate clans should reach the ninth level of Qi Refining before they can be admitted. Our sect, however, isn't that rigid. Nie Tian is like a brother to me now. We survived many desperate situations together. I'll definitely recommend him to the Spiritual Treasure sect after we leave the Green Illusion dimension."

"There's no way you can succeed!" Jiang Lingzhu said, her voice firm and tough.

Pan Tao burst into laughter. "Haha, let's see."

The Secret Dimension Gate would be opened in a few days. Yu Tong had sustained severe injuries, and only three disciples from the Ghost sect and Blood sect were still in fighting condition.

From the look of it, the Ghost sect and the Blood sect could no longer pose a threat to them.

Convinced that they would be able to make it out of the Green Illusion dimension, Pan Tao loosened up, and had already started to think over the matters regarding after they had left the Green Illusion dimension.

“Yeah, we will see!” Jiang Lingzhu said, not willing to back down in the slightest.

For the next few days, Nie Tian and the trial takers from the three sects remained by the Secret Dimension Gate, quietly waiting for it to open.

Since the gate was about to open and there weren't any spirit beasts in the vicinity, they chose to simply endure the hunger.

Five days passed...

Everyone was pale, skinny, and feeling dizzy from starvation. But then, strong waves of spiritual power fluctuations emanated from within the stone wall on the mountain.

“The gate is open!” Excitement spread out on everyone's face.

Soon, the smooth stone wall turned into a bright mirror.

“Everybody, let's leave in orderly fashion!”

Upon An Ying's command, the starving crowd followed one

another into the Secret Dimension Gate.

Beside the lake in the marshland...

An Shiyi from the Spiritual Treasure sect, Li Fan from the Cloudsoaring sect, Sang Bing from the Grayvale sect, and Dowager Weng were chatting as they looked towards the vortex in the lake center.

Sang Bing tilted his chin up and said to An Shiyi, “Assuming there were no mishaps, the Frost Python most likely was slaughtered by Yuan Feng. If that’s the case, don’t you be petty, kid. That Heaven Comprehending Pill must be handed over according to the rules.”

A charming smile appeared on An Shiyi’s face. “How do you know that Yuan Feng killed the Frost Python?”

Sang Bing chuckled up. “Neither your sister An Ying, nor Zheng Bin or Jiang Lingzhu, have truly gone through trials and hardships. But we’ve trained Yuan Feng with harsh circumstances. We even brought him with us when we battled with the Ghost sect. He has been baptized by blood. The Green Illusion dimension trial will have been a piece of cake for him.”

“Oh really,” replied Li Fan, sounding a bit sarcastic. “Then I very much want to see whether he can bring back the Frost Python’s head.”

“You’ll see.” Sang Bing sounded full of confidence.

“They’re coming out!” said Dowager Weng.

With her words, Zheng Bin and the trial takers from the Mystic Mist sect emerged from within the whirlpool.

After them were Jiang Lingzhu and Nie Xian. An Ying, Pan Tao, Nie Tian, and Zheng Rui were the last to walk out.

“Those who come out last always have the greatest gains.” Face joyful, Sang Bing laughed out loud, as if Yuan Feng was going to walk out of the whirlpool in the next second, with the Frost Python’s head in his hand.

However, after laughing for awhile, he realized that after everyone had gone ashore, Yuan Feng still hadn’t showed up.

He immediately packed away his laughter. Brow slightly furrowed, he said, “Could it be that Yuan Feng and his group didn’t get to the stone wall when the Secret Dimension Gate opened?”

Jiang Lingzhu went over to Li Fan and said, “Yuan Feng is not coming back. He’s not the only one. No one from the Grayvale sect will be coming back either..”

“What?!” Sang Bing’s face changed drastically.

# Chapter 81: Temporary Departure

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“The Ghost sect and the Blood sect invaded the Green Illusion dimension...” Jiang Lingzhu said with a sigh. “We’re the only survivors.”

Upon hearing her words, the faces of An Shiyi, Li Fan, Sang Bing, and Dowager Weng all fell.

“The Ghost sect!!! The Blood sect!!!” Sang Bing let out a raging roar that could shake Heaven and Earth.

Yuan Feng had been treated as a core disciple of the Grayvale sect. They had poured a huge amount of medicinal pills and spiritual tools on him, and raised him to be the future leader of the Grayvale sect.

In their eyes, Yuan Feng was far more important than Yun Song and the other eight participants!

Yuan Feng’s death was absolutely unacceptable to them!

Standing among the crowd, Nie Tian felt guilty as he looked over at the howling Sang Bing.

Then, he quietly glanced at Jiang Lingzhu, his heart full of gratefulness.

He knew that if Jiang Lingzhu hadn't taken that banner, Sang Bing from the Grayvale sect would have sensed its existence the moment he stepped out of the Green Illusion dimension.

The more furious and violent Sang Bing became, the clearer he understood, if the secret of him killing Yuan Feng was exposed, what kind of wrath he would have to bear from the Grayvale sect.

That wasn't even mentioning that he wasn't an official disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect yet. However even if he was, he still couldn't possibly escape his doom.

"An Ying, where are the people from the Ghost sect and Blood sect now?" An Shiyi asked hurriedly.

"I don't know." An Ying said with a wry smile. "We chased and killed some of them right before the gate opened, but the rest... somehow disappeared. And we couldn't find any trace of them."

"I'll make them pay!" Roaring, Sang Bing bolted into the whirlpool, and disappeared in the blink of an eye.

After hearing about the appearance of the Ghost sect and Blood sect in the Green Illusion dimension, Dowager Weng from the Mystic Mist sect also lost her composure. "Young Miss An," she said to An Shiyi, "you stay here and take care of them. I'll go with Sang Bing to search the Green Illusion dimension. Hopefully we can still capture the stragglers!"

“I’ll go, too!” said Li Fan from the Cloudsoaring sect.

Faces clouded by haze, the two of them followed Sang Bing into the whirlpool.

Before long, An Shiyi from the Spiritual Treasure sect had become the only senior leader that remained beside the lake, despite the fact that Dowager Weng apparently didn’t even remember her name.

Ignoring that, she turned to the others and grimly said, “Tell me everything!”

Jiang Lingzhu, An Ying, Pan Tao, and Zheng Bin went on to explain in great detail everything that had happened in the Green Illusion dimension.

Meanwhile, Nie Tian stood beside them wordlessly, waiting for them to finish.

At that time, he noticed that An He, the old servant from the An clan, was also waiting beside An Shiyi.

It was An He who had escorted him to this place from Black Cloud City. Now, he had showed up here after the trial ended. He was probably here to pick him up and take him home.

When he looked at An He, An He happened to be looking at him. He put on a wry smile and hurriedly bowed towards An He out of



respect.

An He nodded briefly back at him, then turned to An Shiyi. “Miss, why don’t I take Nie Tian back to Black Cloud City first?”

“Sure, go ahead,” An Shiyi said, waving her hand. “Take him and leave.”

Originally, An Shiyi planned on interrogating An Ying to get a full understanding of Nie Tian’s performance in the Green Illusion dimension, and whether there was anything special about him.

However, the Ghost sect and the Blood sect had showed up, and too many trial takers had died because of it. She was no longer in the mood to ask about Nie Tian.

A heaven-shaking mishap had happened in the Green Illusion dimension, and the Spiritual Treasure sect was the host. As the person in charge of the event, she was currently under too much pressure, thus she had no time to bother with Nie Tian’s trivial issue.

An He waved his hand. “Follow me.”

“Okay,” Nie Tian replied, walking toward him as calmly as ever.

It was at this moment that Pan Tao walked up to him and gave him a bear hug. “I’ll go find you in Black Cloud City in a couple of days, bro,” he said quietly. “I hope we can fight together again.”

Nie Tian was taken aback by his words.

Grasping Nie Tian by the shoulders, Pan Tao winked and mysteriously said, "I'll bring someone with me."

Nie Tian was quite confused, not sure what Pan Tao meant.

"You'll find out soon enough." Pan Tao laughed and pushed him away, saying, "Go, return to Black Cloud City. We'll meet again."

"Alright." Nie Tian didn't read too much into it.

"Pan Tao..."

After witnessing the exchange between Nie Tian and Pan Tao, An He had a strange look in his eyes. He was unclear about what had happened between Pan Tao and Nie Tian.

However, he could tell that Pan Tao had already considered Nie Tian as a brother that he shared life and death with. The sincerity in Pan Tao's eyes couldn't lie.

Pan Tao was the grandson of the grand elder of the Spiritual Treasure sect, Pan Hongzhen, whose status in the Spiritual Treasure sect was only second to the sectmaster.

Even though the An clan of Black Cloud City was highly regarded

by the Spiritual Treasure sect because of An Shiyi, it was still only a subordinate clan of the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Pan Hongzhen's status in the Spiritual Treasure sect wasn't something that An Shiyi or the An clan could compare to.

Seeing the way Pan Tao had treated Nie Tian, An He was shocked inwardly. Originally, he had thought Nie Tian to be a weaselly young man who had used some underhanded method to curry favor with Pan Tao.

Jiang Lingzhu gave Pan Tao a hard look and then called out, "Nie Tian! I'll also go find you in Black Cloud City in a couple of days!"

Pan Tao rubbed his nose and laughed, but declined to comment.

"Jiang Zhisu's precious daughter..."

An He was flabbergasted. Eyes full of suspicion, he looked Nie Tian up and down before glancing over towards Pan Tao and Jiang Lingzhu, even more curious than before.

"This Nie clan kid seems good at cultivating relationships. I can't believe that Pan Tao and Jiang Lingzhu both have grown fond of him."

Previously, when they traveled to the lakeside, An He didn't have much interest in starting a conversation with Nie Tian, as he didn't take Nie Tian seriously. All they did was march on at a fast

pace.

Actually, An He had some unpleasant feelings towards Nie Tian back then.

The spot An Shiyi had given Nie Tian for the Green Illusion dimension trial was originally meant for a child of the An clan. As a member of the An clan, An He secretly frowned upon the arrangement.

Because of this, he didn't talk to Nie Tian the entire way to the lakeside, and only considered him as a kid who had somehow struck it lucky.

But now, the appearance of the disciples of the Ghost sect and the Blood sect in the Green Illusion dimension trial resulted in many people getting killed. The Grayvale sect even had all of their trial takers slaughtered.

He was secretly glad that the kid from the An clan didn't get to enter the Green Illusion dimension, and had thus escaped from the calamity.

Now, without that issue weighing on his mind, and adding in that Pan Tao and Jiang Lingzhu had suddenly grown so close with Nie Tian, An He couldn't help but change his attitude towards him and regard him more favorably.

With an amiable expression, he said to Nie Tian, "Let's go. Your

grandfather and the others have been waiting for you. Since the Nie clan is going through a rough patch, it's better that you return soon."

"What do you mean rough patch?" Nie Tian frowned.

"I'll tell you on the way," An He said gently.

"Okay," said Nie Tian.

Nie Tian also felt the sudden and drastic change in An He's attitude towards him.

Before long, Nie Tian followed An He to the same carriage that they had come in, and they slowly drove out of the marshland.

Meanwhile, An Shiyi and the others were still gathered by the lake, waiting for Sang Bing, Li Fan, and Dowager Weng to return.

A day passed, and Li Fan finally walked out of the whirlpool, holding the pale, skinny, and close to death Ye Gumo with one hand.

"Brother Ye is still alive?!" Jiang Lingzhu exclaimed with joy.

Li Fan dropped the almost unconscious Ye Gumo at her side, and said, "This kid is lucky. He hid by himself in the volcano area, and I when found him, he was on the verge of dying from starvation."

Ye Gumo's head was still drooped, as he looked up at Jiang Lingzhu. He forced a smile and said weakly, "It's good that you guys are fine."

"Mr. Li, where are Sang Bing and Dowager Weng?" An Shiyi asked hurriedly.

With a sigh, Li Fan said, "They should be out soon. We turned the whole Green Illusion dimension inside out, and still couldn't find the disciples from the Ghost sect and the Blood sect. They probably left long ago."

This was, of course, to be expected.

Shortly after, the grim-faced Sang Bing and Dowager Weng walked out of the lake together.

Sang Bing didn't say a word before striding away.

Dowager Weng shook her head towards An Shiyi and said, "We found nothing. The Green Illusion dimension trial is truly over now. Let's go back, and discuss the upcoming issues another day."

"Yeah, I'm afraid that's all there is to do," An Shiyi said bitterly.

Thereupon, the leaders of each sect led their respective juniors away.

# Chapter 82: Arriving Home

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Three days later, in Black Cloud City. Dusk...

Nie Tian was sitting in the carriage as An He drove through the city gate.

After entering the city, the front curtain of the carriage had already been lifted, as An He would occasionally glance at Nie Tian.

On their way to the Green Illusion dimension trial, the curtain of the carriage had never been lifted. During those three days, An He had practically ignored Nie Tian, and they had traveled in silence.

However, on their way back, An He took the initiative to pull up the curtain, and had friendly conversations with Nie Tian along the way, spelling out the conflicts between Black Cloud City's three clans in detail.

Nie Tian also had a clear feeling that An He's attitude towards him had undergone a fundamental change.

From An He, Nie Tian learned that there had been internal disputes within the Nie clan in recent months, with the focus being the Flamecloud gem mine.

Nie Beichuan had confirmed that they would no longer be able to mine Flamecloud gems from it.

He, who had just ascended to the position of clanmaster, panicked. He had interrogated every single one of the miners, and found out that Nie Qian had taken Nie Tian into the mine, then blamed Nie Qian for everything that occurred.

Since he couldn't figure out a way to explain what had happened to the Cloudsoaring sect, he had deliberately made things difficult for Nie Qian, and had repeatedly urged Nie Donghai to take Nie Qian to the Cloudsoaring sect and admit to causing the mining accident.

In Nie Beichuan's eyes, Nie Donghai didn't have much time left anyways. He might as well sacrifice himself and shoulder the wrath of the Cloudsoaring sect together with Nie Qian, and thus bring peace and safety back to the Nie clan.

His decision won the assent of many clan elders, who later joined him in rebuking Nie Donghai and Nie Qian.

"Uncle An, did the Cloudsoaring sect do anything after learning that the mine could no longer produce Flamecloud gems?" Nie Tian asked.

Driving the carriage slowly towards the Nie clan, An He frowned and said, "Quite strangely, no. According to what I know, it seems the Cloudsoaring sect hasn't made any statements or held your clan accountable."

"Then why did they insist on making my grandfather and aunt



admit the guilt?” Nie Tian asked, his voice cold.

After a moment of hesitation, An He explained, “Because they’re scared. The Cloudsoaring sect assigned that mine together with the job of mining it to your clan. The reason that your clan had been acknowledged and protected by the Cloudsoaring sect all these years was that your clan has been working for them.

“Some drastic change occurred, ensuring that a mine which should have been able to produce Flamecloud gems for another ten years went dry overnight. Before the Cloudsoaring sect raised any questions, your second grandfather already started to panic.

“Monumental changes struck the mine which the livelihood of the entire Nie clan relies on, all when he took power. How could he not be scared?”

Nie Tian snorted and said, “He doesn’t deserve to be my second grandfather!”

An He turned to look at Nie Tian. After a moment of pondering, he said, “When your grandfather was in his prime, he severely injured Nie Beichuan during their fight for the position of clanmaster. After that incident, the two brothers became estranged. Your grandfather controlled the Nie clan and overshadowed Nie Beichuan for many years after that. Now that your grandfather has finally lost his power, Nie Beichuan surely won’t bother to consider the brotherly love between them.”

“My grandfather will reassume the position of clanmaster one

day!” Nie Tian said in a firm, low voice.

An He laughed. With a meaningful look in his eyes, he glanced at Nie Tian and said, “Perhaps so.”

If it were before, An He probably would ridicule him a bit, and tell him that he didn’t know the immensity of heaven and earth.

But now, An He felt that it might not be impossible for Nie Tian to help Nie Donghai regain his former position if he kept his upheaving momentum.

Pan Tao and Jiang Lingzhu were two extremely important third generation disciples of the Spiritual Treasure sect and Cloudsoaring sect. The powers backing those two would even put An He in awe.

As long as Pan Tao and Jiang Lingzhu continued to support Nie Tian, he would definitely gain benefits from the rise of Pan Tao and Jiang Lingzhu in their respective sects.

“We’re here.”

An He pulled on the reins and stopped the carriage.

Nie Tian jumped out and thanked An He respectfully. After that, he prompted, “Okay, I’ll head off now, alright Uncle An?”

An He nodded and smiled. “Go on, now. Don’t worry. If Nie Beichuan makes it too hard for you, you can come to our clan. Since the miss regards you so highly, you’re welcomed to visit anytime you want. Nie Beichuan’s power may be enough to turn the heavens in the Nie clan, but he’s just a commoner in the eyes of our clan.”

“Thank you, uncle An. I got it.”

An He nodded, signaling for Nie Tian to go in. With a lash of his horsewhip, he drove the carriage back in the direction of the An clan.

Nie Tian took a deep breath, and with a calm mind, he finally stepped towards the entrance of the Nie clan.

At the entrance, the guard Jin Jiang saw him, and was suddenly given a start. “Nie... Nie Tian?!”

Jin Jiang wasn’t a true member of the Nie clan, but rather a guest-member. However, people like him had a knack for gathering information.

It took three whole days for Nie Tian and An He to return to Black Cloud City from the marshland, yet it only took one day for the news of the horrible incident in the Green Illusion dimension to reach Black Cloud City.

Members of the three major clans in Black Cloud City had been

all talking about it the whole day.

Among the many trial takers who participated in the Green Illusion dimension trial, Nie Tian was the most unremarkable one. Thus, none of the news that had come from the four sects regarded him.

The Yun clan, on the other hand, had already been filled with wailing and despair after hearing about the annihilation of the entire Grayvale sect group in the Green Illusion dimension.

Earlier this morning, when Jin Jiang walked past the Yun clan, he could just barely hear the shrill weeping sounds of Yuan Qiuying. It was at that moment that the Yun clan had received the news that Yun Song, whom they placed such high hopes upon, had died in the Green Illusion dimension.

Jin Jiang also heard that the Grayvale sect wasn't the only one that had suffered great casualties. The other three sects had also lost many juniors.

In his opinion, Nie Tian, who was unluckily invited to the Green Illusion dimension trial by An Shiyi, was probably the weakest of all, and his status wasn't even worth mentioning. He should've long since died in the Green Illusion dimension.

He had never expected him to return alive, especially after knowing that Yun Song had died in there.

“What’s wrong?” Nie Tian furrowed his brow.

Jin Jiang snapped out of his reverie and smiled embarrassedly, “We all thought you had died in the Green Illusion dimension just like Yun Song from the Yun clan... Nie Tian, your grandfather and aunt abandoned all hope after hearing about the enormous events that occurred. You’d better go see them right away.”

He was not a member of the Nie clan, so Nie Tian’s life or death didn’t exactly affect him.

Nie Tian was taken aback. “The news of the incidents in the Green Illusion dimension has already reached Black Cloud City?”

“Of course.” Jin Jiang nodded. “The news can be spread via many ways, so it beat you back. You’d better go. Your grandfather locked himself in his house and hasn’t come out since. Your aunt seems to have spent the day crying. You’d better go relieve them now.”

“Many thanks!” Nie Tian rushed through the clan gate.

On his way in, every clan member who caught sight of him was greatly surprised by his unbelievable return.

“Nie Tian!”

“No way! Nie Tian is still alive?!”

“Yuan Feng and Yun Song died, but he returns alive?”

“He’s really lucky!”

“ ... ”

Under the astonished gazes of everyone, Nie Tian ran to the remote pavilion where his grandfather Nie Donghai lived.

Before even reaching the door, Nie Tian shouted at the top of his lungs. “Grandpa, I’m back!!”

Inside the room, Nie Donghai, who was drowning in desperation with all the windows shut, felt a strong shock and suddenly became enlivened.

He subconsciously wiped away the tears from the corners of his bloodshot eyes, and thrust the door open.

“Little Tian! Is that you? Did I just hear Little Tian’s voice?” Not far away, Nie Qian’s sobbing voice echoed out, as she dashed out from a small pavilion.

“Grandpa, auntie, I’m fine,” Nie Tian said loudly. “I’m back from the Green Illusion dimension!”

As soon as those words were uttered, he caught sight of Nie

Donghai and Nie Qian, who were staring at him ecstatically.

In that moment, he suddenly realized that those two had placed all of their hopes and love on him.

He was their everything!

## Chapter 83: The Strife Inside the Clan

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Inside the room, Nie Tian briefly described his experience in the Green Illusion dimension to Nie Donghai and Nie Qian.

The Green Illusion dimension trial had exerted an immense influence on him, not only on his cultivation base, but also on his wisdom.

Compared to half a year ago, he was now much more mature, as he knew what to tell and what not to tell Nie Donghai and Nie Qian.

He intentionally concealed the fact that he had killed Yuan Feng and Yun Song, and that he had encountered the Frost Python in the desert.

He had also avoided talking about his clashes with Yu Tong, as well as the great boost in cultivation that he had received from the spirit beast meat.

However, he was honest about the fact that he had broken through to the eighth level of Qi Refining from the sixth level.

He understood that those were the kind of things that Nie Donghai and Nie Qian were most concerned with.

As expected.



“What?! You’re now at the eighth level of Qi Refining?” Nie Qian immediately grew excited.

Nie Donghai was also secretly moved. A bright gleam exploded out from his eyes as his body even slightly trembled with excitement.

Nie Tian grinned. “Yes. If there are no mishaps, I believe I’ll be able to reach the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of 15, and become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect.”

“That’s terrific!” Nie Qian was elated.

Nie Tian was only eleven years old. Reaching the eighth level of Qi Refining at this age made her realize that the hope she had placed on Nie Tian was definitely achievable.

Ever since Nie Tian was young, Nie Qian had repeatedly imparted upon Nie Tian one idea – only by becoming a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect would he be able to change his fate.

All the efforts she had put in over the years had been dedicated to making him a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect.

Every child of the Nie clan regarded entering the Cloudsoaring sect as the ultimate honor, and also the only way to change their families’ fates.

The reason for Nie Beichuan to be able to assume the position of

clanmaster, was partly because Nie Donghai had sustained serious injuries, but more importantly because of Nie Han's achievement.

As Nie Beichuan's eldest grandson, Nie Han had successfully stepped into the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of 15, and thus been received by the Cloudsoaring sect.

As long as he could achieve a steady growth in the Cloudsoaring sect, the Nie clan would be able to benefit because of that. If Nie Han were to become a high ranking official in the Cloudsoaring sect one day, then the Nie clan... would undoubtedly become an important part of the Cloudsoaring sect.

Similarly, back when Nie Donghai had a firm control over the Nie clan, Nie Tian's mother Nie Jin had played an indispensable role.

Now that Nie Tian was only 11 years old and had already entered the eighth level of Qi Refining, Nie Qian believed he might even be able to enter the Cloudsoaring sect at a younger age than Nie Han.

Perhaps Nie Tian would be able to step into the Cloudsoaring sect in a year or two, and thus completely turn his fate around.

“Grandfather, when I returned, I heard that our clan is going through a major internal disturbance?” Nie Tian probed.

Nie Donghai briefly frowned, and said calmly, “Compared to your entering the eighth level of Qi Refining, they are only small

things. Don't you bother about the trivial matters within the clan. I will handle them. All you need to do is focus on your cultivation."

"I... I want to help," Nie Tian said.

"You won't be able to do much for now." Nie Donghai shook his head. "You'll only have a say in the clan when you become a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect."

When it came to the matters within the clan, Nie Qian suddenly fell silent, and her face turned grim.

Nie Tian wished to help, but didn't know how to stop Nie Beichuan and the clan elders from punishing Nie Qian and Nie Donghai.

"Status..." he thought. "My status is too low..."

"Rest well today," Nie Donghai said consolingly. "And from now on, don't think about anything else, just concentrate on your cultivation. You'll have a say in the clan affairs when you're officially accepted by the Cloudsoaring sect. But now is not the time."

"I see," Nie Tian said with a nod.

Meanwhile...

Nie Beichuan was discussing matters with several clan elders in the great meeting hall.

Soon, they reached an agreement that they would force Nie Donghai and Nie Qian to admit to the Cloudsoaring sect that it was their fault that the mine experienced such drastic changes, and that they were willing to accept the punishment.

Now they only needed to force Nie Donghai and Nie Qian to comply.

Before long, the news of Nie Tian returning spread to the great meeting hall, and the clan elders were all flabbergasted.

“Nie Tian is back!”

“He’s really in luck! Even Yuan Feng from the Grayvale sect and Yun Song from the Yun clan died tragically in Green Illusion dimension. I can’t believe he actually returned safe and sound.”

“Yeah, who would have thought?”

In fact, they had never considered Nie Tian as a true member of the Nie clan.

After all, Nie Tian’s father, whom Nie Tian had never met, didn’t bear the family name ‘Nie’.

In their eyes, only children whose father bore the family name 'Nie' were to be deemed as true members of the Nie clan.

Nie Tian wasn't one of them.

Therefore, when they learned about the fact that Nie Tian returned alive, they were only shocked, but not a bit relieved.

"That brat is really lucky!" said one of the clan elders, Nie Yaozu, sounding slightly surprised. A moment later, though, he cast Nie Tian's return aside, and said, "Trial takers from the four sects were massacred in the Green Illusion dimension. Many Cloudsoaring sect elders must be in a sour mood at this tragic moment. If we don't make a gesture and admit our dereliction of duty as soon as possible, it will only fuel their rage."

Face grim, Nie Beichuan said, "Exactly, we can't afford to delay any more!"

Another clan elder named Nie Feiyun wore a dour expression as he cold-heartedly said, "Since Donghai's injuries seem to be incurable in the little time he has left, he won't be able to help the clan much in the future. In order for the Nie clan to tide over the crisis, he has to make sacrifices. Besides, it was Nie Qian who caused this accident!"

Nie Feiyun had always been a firm supporter of Nie Beichuan. Moreover, Nie Donghai had feuded with him when he was still the clanmaster. It was expected that he didn't treat this incident

lightly.

Even though some of the clan members didn't completely support the decision, they still nodded briefly.

After all, they understood that someone would have to atone for the accident that had happened in the mine. Since everyone pointed their fingers towards Nie Donghai and Nie Qian, for the clan's benefit, they chose chime in.

"Let's summon them here tomorrow, and convince them to undertake the guilt," Nie Beichuan said coldly.

...

That night...

Nie Tian quietly retrieved the hidden dragon bone from behind one of the bricks on the wall, and started to fondle it admiringly.

With a strand of psychic awareness, he reached out to the drop of blood inside the dragon bone. He immediately felt peace at heart.

Having parted with the dragon bone for half a year, he found that it hadn't changed at all. When he held it closely in his hand, he could just barely sense that dragon bone had also missed him.

He didn't think much about it, and soon fell into a relaxed

slumber.

The next morning, he got up and started his assiduous cultivation, just like before.

In the afternoon, a knocking sound suddenly rang out while he was cultivating.

Wondering who it was, he went down stairs to open the door. Seeing it was the guest elder, Wu Tao, standing in front of the door with a complicated expression on his face, Nie Tian asked, “Mr. Wu, why are you here?”

Wu Tao glanced around and made sure no one was around. Only then did he say in a low voice, “The clanmaster and the clan elders have come to a decision in the great meeting hall this morning, that they will have your grandfather and aunt confess to the Cloudsoaring sect. Your grandfather and aunt are probably already at the main gate and are about to set out.”

Nervousness could be seen on Wu Tao’s face as he added, “Don’t tell anyone that I came by or that we met.”

Finishing relaying the situation, Wu Tao left in a hurry, not daring to stay any longer.

“Nie Beichuan!” Nie Tian’s eyes brimmed with rage.

He thought that with his grandfather’s prestige, as well as the

contributions that he had made to the clan over the years, Nie Beichuan wouldn't dare to be so impudent, and so he believed that Nie Donghai would be able to handle this matter well.

Never had he expected for Nie Beichuan to make such a cold-hearted move only a day after his return.

With a grim face, he dashed towards the clan gate.

Many members of the Nie clan saw him and whispered with one another, as they felt that he wouldn't be able to do anything even if he made it to the gate in time.

“Yee? Is that Nie Tian?”

“How did he get the word?”

“Why? Does that matter? He's not a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect. Yeah, he managed to walk out of the Green Illusion dimension, so what? Will he be able to overturn the decision that the clanmaster and the elders agreed upon?”

“He's not Nie Xian. The elders won't consider his feelings.”

“That's true.”



## Chapter 84: A Talent Scout Comes Knocking

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At the Nie clan's main gate, all the clansmen, led by Nie Beichuan, were looking at Nie Donghai and Nie Qian with all kinds of expressions.

Nie Beichuan's face was cold and expressionless. A hint of a cold smile could be seen at the corner of clan elder Nie Feiyun's mouth, as if he was secretly pleased.

Some of the other clan elders, however, had complicated looks in their eyes, as if they felt guilty inside, but still couldn't say anything.

Most of the clansmen were here to see them off, after learning that Nie Donghai and Nie Qian were about to go and beg for forgiveness from the Cloudsoaring sect. Their gaze was somewhat indignant and helpless as they looked towards the father and daughter.

Having realized that the result was certain, Nie Donghai behaved very calmly, and didn't start a fight with Nie Beichuan and his flunkies in front of all the clansmen.

The oldest clan elder Nie Yaozu pondered for a bit and said, "Donghai, don't you worry too much about this trip to the Cloudsoaring sect. You've done a good job working for the Cloudsoaring sect for all these years. They... may not necessarily punish you for the accident at the mine."

Nie Yaozu believed that the vanishing of all the Flamecloud gems in the mine could have just been an accident and probably had nothing to do with Nie Qian.

However, since someone had to atone for the accident to the Cloudsoaring sect, he had also deemed Nie Donghai to be the most suitable man to take the blame, considering that he was no longer the clanmaster, and probably wouldn't be able to make any more contributions to the Nie clan with his degrading health.

But actually, deep down, he felt somewhat sorry towards Nie Donghai and Nie Qian. Only because of that did he say a few words of consolation.

"I understand," Nie Donghai nodded briefly and said. "I'll go to the Cloudsoaring sect to beg for their forgiveness. But Nie Tian is still young. If I were to receive punishments and can't return, I hope you can take care of him for me, considering what I'm doing for the clan today."

"You can be assured of that." Nie Yaozu promised.

With nothing more to say, Nie Donghai turned around, and was about to set off with Nie Qian.

At this very moment, Nie Tian bolted out of the clan gate, yelling.

"Grandfather!"

Under the clansmen's gazes, he stopped in front of Nie Donghai and Nie Qian, blocking their way, and said, "I'll take full responsibility of the accident at the Flamecloud gem mine and go beg for forgiveness from the Cloudsoaring sect!"

"Little Tian!" Nie Qian snapped. "What are you doing? You're not helping. Go back, now!"

Nie Donghai gave him a hard look and berated, "The reason I didn't go to see you was that I didn't want you to be distracted. Don't behave so immaturely!"

Nie Tian didn't back down because of their words. Instead, he stood straight like a mountain, raised his chin towards Nie Beichuan, and said, "Clanmaster, my grandfather is in his old years, and won't be able to withstand the anger of the Cloudsoaring sect. Moreover, I happened to be there when the mining accident occurred. If the clan needs to find a scapegoat for it, I'll go!"

"How impudent!" Nie Beichuan let out a cold harrumph. "What do you mean 'find a scapegoat'? Sure, you were there with Nie Qian when the changes occurred in the mine, however, on what account do you think that you caused the changes? Plus, what are you? How old are you? Wouldn't it be a humiliation to the Nie clan if we give you to the Cloudsoaring sect? Wouldn't the Cloudsoaring sect think that we're taking them as fools?"

A few clan elders joined Nie Beichuan, and berated Nie Tian

harshly.

“Nie Tian! Cut the nonsense! You shouldn’t be here!”

“Exactly! It’s a joke to send a child to the Cloudsoaring sect!”

“Get out of here, now!”

They had just gone to great lengths to persuade Nie Donghai and Nie Qian to take the blame. How could they allow Nie Tian to tamper with their plan?

The way they saw it, Nie Tian’s words were merely a joke.

Only Nie Tian himself knew that the changes that had occurred in the mine were indeed caused by him.

He could never tell them that it was his dragon bone that had drained every wisp of the flame power of every Flamecloud gem in the mine, reducing them to rubble.

Yet, there was no way that he could sit back and watch his grandfather and aunt bear the Cloudsoaring sect’s anger because of something he had caused.

Nie Donghai’s third brother, Nie Nanshan looked incensed as he ordered his son to take Nie Tian back inside. “Nie Qiu! Take Nie Tian back! Don’t let people laugh at our clan!”

At that time, a lot of commoners of Black Cloud City had heard the disturbance, and quietly converged on the main gate of the Nie clan.

In just a few moments, dozens of people were gathered by the gate.

“Nie Tian! Get back inside!” Nie Donghai said with a stern face.

“NO!” Nie Tian shook his head and blurted. “I’ll take the blame from the Cloudsoaring sect!”

With these words, he strode outward before Nie Qiu could grab him.

At that time, Pan Tao’s voice echoed out from behind the crowd of people.

“Nie Tian! What the hell are you doing? I’ve come all this way from the Spiritual Treasure sect. You won’t leave just like that without even greeting me, will you?”

Nie Tian was taken aback, and looked in confusion in the direction that Pan Tao’s voice had come from, searching for him.

“Give way!” An explosive shout echoed out from behind the crowd.

All of a sudden, the crowd burst into clamor. At the source of Pan Tao's voice, many onlookers stepped back, clearing out a wide path.

"It's the master of the An clan, An Rong!"

"The master of the An clan is here!"

In the next moment, Nie Tian saw Pan Tao and a middle-aged man with similar looks pace towards him under the escort of the master of the An clan, An Rong.

An Rong was in his sixties, tall and with a long beard. He was now wearing a long face, looking formidable without being angry.

After giving way to him, many commoners of Black Cloud City briefly bowed and greeted him with flattering smiles on their faces.

"Greetings, Master An."

"Good day, Master An."

"Long time no see, Master An."

An Rong completely ignored everyone's greetings as he respectfully led the middle-aged man beside Pan Tao towards the

place where the Nie clan members were gathered.

Among the three major clans in Black Cloud City, the strength of the An clan had always ranked first, a ranking that had never changed for decades.

In the eyes of most people in Black Cloud City, An Rong was actually the master of Black Cloud City, and therefore the most powerful person there.

Everyone was puzzled to see that he had come to the Nie clan, and even more so when they saw him leading the way for a stranger.

“An Rong, what are you doing here?” Nie Beichuan’s words sounded somewhat lacking in confidence. However, from their titles, he was actually on equal footing with An Rong.

The bad-tempered An Rong immediately lashed out. “Nie Beichuan, is Black Cloud City your personal property? Do I have to inform you beforehand every time I take a walk in Black Cloud City?”

Nie Beichuan simmered with rage, yet he could do nothing about it. “Well, we didn’t invite you here!”

“I wouldn’t go to your shithole clan even if you did invite me!” An Rong sneered. “Ever since your brother got injured, your clan has been in a complete mess! Endless internal disputes. You find

that interesting, don't you?"

"That's none of your business!" Nie Beichuan retorted.

"Hahaha, who said I give a damn!" An Rong replied tauntingly. "I heard that you people ruined the Cloudsoaring sect's mine? Well, I'm going to have so much fun watching how that turns out! The moment you became the clanmaster, that mine collapsed! That's a pretty bad sign!

"Your clan's livelihood depends on that mine. Now that it has collapsed, I'm afraid it won't be long before your position collapses with it."

An Rong burst out into laughter, as he only attacked Nie Beichuan's sore points without giving him any face.

Many of the surrounding onlookers pondered over his words, and thought he actually made some sense.

Even some members of the Nie clan secretly agreed with An Rong, and started to suspect that it was because of Nie Beichuan's bad luck that the mine had suddenly collapsed immediately after he had become the clanmaster.

"Cut the nonsense!" Nie Beichuan fumed with anger, glaring furiously. Yet, he couldn't find a way to refute.

At that time, the middle-aged man and Pan Tao had already



walked to Nie Tian's side.

“Nie Tian, this is my father.” Pan Tao pointed at the man beside him, and smiled as he introduced him. After that, he pointed at Nie Tian and said, “Father, this is my good bro Nie Tian.”

Nie Tian quickly bowed. “Nice to meet you, Uncle Pan.”

Pan Bai smiled, and with a gentle tone, he said, “The moment Little Tao returned to the Spiritual Treasure sect, he urged me to come to Black Cloud City with him. On our way here, he told me how you two fought shoulder to shoulder and went through desperate occasions together in the Green Illusion dimension. He really has a high opinion of you.”

Someone in the crowd, who had his eyes fixed on Pan Bai the moment Pan Bai showed up, finally remembered his identity.

“Pan Bai!” the man cried out. “He's the Pan Bai from the Spiritual Treasure sect! Years ago, it was he who came to take An Shiyi to the Spiritual Treasure sect! And he's the son of the great elder Pan Hongzhen!

“He's in charge of recruitment for the Spiritual Treasure sect. He seems to be at the late-stage of Heaven stage!

“How come he's in Black Cloud City?

“Pan Bai!”

Every member of the Nie clan, including Nie Donghai was suddenly enlivened. Eyes filled with disbelief, they simultaneously gazed toward Pan Bai.

As of that moment, they finally understood why An Rong was so respectful towards this person.

Even with An Shiyi in the Spiritual Treasure sect, the An clan was still a subordinate clan. However, Pan Bai was one of the core figures in the Spiritual Treasure sect, whose father's status was only second to the sectmaster.

An Rong stopped ridiculing the long-faced Nie Beichuan, turned to Nie Donghai and solemnly said, "Nie Donghai, you're in luck. Mr. Pan has come to Black Cloud City for Nie Tian. Mr. Pan is in charge of recruiting promising youngsters for the Spiritual Treasure sect. As long as he has his eyes on the child, he doesn't need to be at the ninth level of Qi Refining to be admitted as a disciple.

"He's here is to take Nie Tian to the Spiritual Treasure sect, just like when he admitted An Shiyi from our clan."

Upon hearing these words, every onlooker, including the members of the Nie clan, immediately burst into an uproar.

# Chapter 85: Fighting over a Disciple!

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“Personally coming to admit Nie Tian to the Spiritual Treasure sect? Isn’t the Nie clan the Cloudsoaring sect’s subordinate clan?”

“What a lucky kid...”

“Normally, Pan Bai wouldn’t personally take someone back to the Spiritual Treasure sect. Those whom he had his eyes on all displayed remarkable talent in the Spiritual Treasure sect, and none of them turned out to be mediocre.”

“Years ago, he came and took An Shiyi from the An clan to the Spiritual Treasure sect. Now look at her. She is already an influential figure in the sect.”

“This man is famous for his eye for talent. Those who managed to get his attention all turned out to be important figures.”

“What does he see in Nie Tian?”

“...”

After realizing why Pan Bai had come here, the onlookers immediately fell into an uproar.

Meanwhile, everyone from the Nie clan was flabbergasted, and couldn’t wrap their minds around what Nie Tian had done in the

Green Illusion dimension to make Pan Bai set his eyes on him.

“Spiritual Treasure sect! Spiritual Treasure sect!” Nie Qian slightly trembled as her eyes glittered with bright lights. Years of endurance had finally paid off.

Nie Donghai breathed deeply, struggling to calm himself. Finally pacified, he nervously looked towards Pan Bai as he carefully asked, “Mr. Pan, is what An Rong said true?”

Nie Tian regained his composure after a moment of bewilderment. He looked at Pan Bai, unable to make heads or tails of the situation.

At this time, it rushed back to him that when he parted with Pan Tao days ago, Pan Tao had told him that he would bring someone to see him in Black Cloud City.

Now he knew who Pan Tao had been talking about.

Under everyone’s gaze, Pan Bai smiled and said, “In the entire Spiritual Treasure sect, I’m the most famous for being a good judge of talent. All these years, those disciples that I’ve brought back to the Spiritual Treasure sect have all proved their abilities not long after they were admitted.

“Not only am I a good judge of talent, but so is my son.”

As he spoke, he looked towards Pan Tao, who confidently stuck

out his chest upon hearing his father's words.

“I trust my son's eye for people, and I trust my judgement.” He looked profoundly towards Nie Tian, and with a serious face, he finally brought out what everyone was waiting to hear, “That's right. I've come to Black Cloud City for Nie Tian. I hereby officially invite Nie Tian to continue his cultivation in the Spiritual Treasure sect as a disciple!”

“He's serious!” Nie Yaozu was taken aback.

Upon hearing Pan Bai's words, the other Nie clan members all looked towards Nie Tian with extremely strange gazes in their eyes.

Nie Beichuan, on the other hand, didn't say a word. With a dour face, he seemed to be bothered by something.

Even as the crowd clamored, a commoner of Black Cloud City moved close to An Rong's side and loudly said, “Master An, you were here late and missed a good show. Let me tell you what happened...”

He then went on to relay how Nie Tian had interrupted Nie Beichuan and the others as they attempted to force Nie Donghai and Nie Qian to go to the Cloudsoaring sect to beg for forgiveness.

An Rong laughed loudly. “Nie Beichuan, you sure are resourceful! The moment you assumed your position, the mine collapsed. You

don't examine what you've done wrong. Instead, you force your eldest brother to take the blame. How competent are you!?"

"Shut the hell up, An Rong!" Nie Beichuan roared, enraged.

An Rong didn't seem to be the least bit concerned. "What? You can do it, but can't hear people talk about it? As I see it then, you don't need to remain in such a land of trouble."

Nie Donghai didn't respond, yet his face turned dark and grim.

However, Pan Bai frowned and said, "Mr. Nie, you and Nie Tian's aunt can also go to the Spiritual Treasure sect. I'll make arrangements for the both of you."

"What?! Even Nie Donghai and Nie Qian will be accepted by the Spiritual Treasure sect as well? No way..."

"I can't believe they think so highly of Nie Tian!"

"They're willing to accept Nie Tian and two others as tagalongs? What could possibly be going on?"

Everyone was shocked by Pan Bai's words.

Nie Donghai, Nie Qian, and Nie Tian suddenly became enlivened, and at the same time, cast incredulous gazes towards Pan Bai.

Pan Bai gently nodded his head.

The previously depressed Nie Donghai was clearly moved by Pan Bai's offer. His eyes flickered, as indecision appeared on his face.

The Spiritual Treasure sect's offer was so irresistible that he was actually considering completely breaking away from the Nie clan and taking Nie Tian and Nie Qian to the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Brimming with excitement, Nie Qian called out, "Father!!"

Since she had already secretly made up her mind, she anxiously urged Nie Donghai to accept the offer, in case Pan Bai went back on his word.

To them, Pan Bai's offer was practically a pie falling from the heavens. It seemed too good to be real.

Over the years, she and her father had constantly been targeted within the Nie clan, which made their life extremely tough.

The moment she learned that Pan Bai was here to accept them to the Spiritual Treasure sect, she inwardly agreed a thousand times over to break away from the Nie clan, the home of her heartache.

It was also at this time that Li Fan's voice echoed out from afar. "Mr. Pan, the Nie clan is the Cloudsoaring sect's subordinate clan. It's not exactly appropriate for you to so openly take from us, is it?"

“Li Fan from the Cloudsoaring sect!”

“How come he’s also here? They’re about to put on a good show!”

“It’s a little crowded in Black Cloud City today, isn’t it?”

Accompanied by the clamor of the crowd, Li Fan, disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect’s sectmaster Jiang Zhisu, led Jiang Lingzhu as they walked closer.

The moment Li Fan and Jiang Lingzhu appeared, Nie Beichuan and numerous members of the Nie clan, who originally felt inferior, seemed to suddenly gain confidence, as they looked over towards Li Fan one after the other.

“Mr. Li, you have to administer justice!”

“Those from the Spiritual Treasure sect are trashing our clan!”

“Nie Donghai and his daughter caused the mine to collapse, and now they actually want to break away from the clan. This is simply unforgivable!”

Helplessness filling their eyes, they stared at Li Fan as they made critical comments, wishing for him to overshadow Pan Bai.

“Pan Tao!” Jiang Lingzhu cried out, pointing at him angrily.



“You bastard! I knew you’d come to the Black Cloud City to stir things up! I already told you in the Green Illusion dimension that Nie Tian is going to join the Cloudsoaring sect. Don’t you even think of trying to win him over!”

With a shrug, Pan Tao said, “Doesn’t your sect have a rule that only those who reach the ninth level of Qi Refining will be eligible to become a disciple? Nie Tian doesn’t meet the requirement, therefore you guys won’t admit him to your sect anyways. Is it a problem that we’re willing to admit him while you aren’t?”

“Who said that we’re not willing to accept him?” Jiang Lingzhu placed her hands on her hips, assuming a domineering posture. “I talked to my father as soon as I came back from the Green Illusion dimension, and he immediately gave permission. The reason Uncle Li and I are here is to bring Nie Tian back and officially admit him as a disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect!”

“What?” someone blurted shrilly. “Did I hear that right? The Cloudsoaring sect wants Nie Tian too? How lucky could that kid be for the Spiritual Treasure sect and the Cloudsoaring sect to scramble for him?”

“Doesn’t the Cloudsoaring sect have harsh rules towards their subordinate clans? Only those who can enter the ninth level of Qi Refining by the age of 15 should be eligible to become an official disciple?”

“Don’t tell me that the Cloudsoaring sect is breaking the rules for Nie Tian!”

“What the hell is going on?”

After realizing that Li Fan’s purpose was the same as Pan Bai’s, every single one of the onlookers were flabbergasted.

The moment Nie Donghai and Nie Qian heard Jiang Lingzhu’s words, and realized that the sectmaster was willing to break the rules for Nie Tian, they were at a complete loss of words.

“Mr. Li, you... are you really here for Nie Tian?” Apparently, Nie Beichuan was somewhat flustered.

With a brief nod, Li Fan said seriously, “It’s my master’s wish.”

“But for decades, the Cloudsoaring sect has only admitted youngsters with a cultivation base at the ninth level of Qi Refining. And the rule applies to all the subordinate clans, not just the Nie clan.” Nie Beichuan seemed panicked. “That has been the rule for decades, a rule set by you! How can you break it just like that?”

Indifference appeared on Li Fan’s face. “We make the rules, so we can break the rules. As long as my master says the word, then all rules are breakable.”

After pausing for a moment, he seemed to have recalled something and chuckled, saying, “Well... the rule isn’t completely abolished. It’ll still apply to Nie clan children who wish to be admitted by the Cloudsoaring sect in the future.”

“So Nie Tian...” Nie Beichuan asked, confused.

“He is and will be the only exception!” Li Fan said solemnly.

Nie Beichuan froze.

“Oh, by the way, what happened in the mine was only an accident. It was nobody’s fault.” Brow furrowed, Li Fan continued, “If you failed to unveil the true reason, then you should have made an honest report, and let us investigate it, instead of forcing your elder brother and niece to take the blame.

Nie Beichuan’s face suddenly turned lifeless.

“Ever since you assumed the position of clanmaster, things has been very messy, and my master has become quite displeased.” Li Fan looked towards the Nie clan elders, and said with a grim expression, “You people pick a new clanmaster!”

With these words, he intentionally took a glance at Nie Donghai.

“I, I, I....” Nie Beichuan stammered. He wanted to say something, yet couldn’t utter a complete sentence.

## Chapter 86: The Result Is Now Certain

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When Li Fan uttered the words “My master isn’t pleased”, it essentially forced Nie Beichuan to resign. No matter whether he was willing to or not, he would have to give up the position of clanmaster.

Li Fan intentionally glanced at Nie Donghai when he told the Nie clan elders to choose a new clanmaster, which was a clear implication.

Clan elder Nie Feiyun, a dedicated supporter of Nie Beichuan, had a deathly pale face. His expression froze and he didn’t dare to say a single word in refutation.

The eldest clan elder, Nie Yaozu, secretly heaved a sigh. He turned to Li Fan and said, “We’ll do as the sectmaster wishes, and choose a new clanmaster.”

Face indifferent, Li Fan waved his hand and said, “Clansmen fighting in front of their own clan; what kind of image does this make of you?” He indicated for all the Nie clan members to return to the clan.

“Sorry for our poor manners,” Nie Yaozu responded on Nie Beichuan’s behalf, and instructed the Nie clan members to get inside.

Meanwhile, Nie Beichuan seemed to have lost his soul and was dragged away from the clan gate by his third brother Nie Nanshan.

It was only a moment before all the Nie clan members went inside, leaving only Nie Tian, Nie Donghai, and Nie Qian at the gate.

“Mr. Pan, Master An, shall we speak inside?” asked Li Fan.

Pan Bai and An Rong also understood that it wouldn't be appropriate if they got into a fight with Li Fan in front of the whole lot of civilians. Therefore, they both nodded and followed Li Fan into the Nie clan.

“Mr. Nie, let's go in,” Li Fan said to Nie Donghai. “Shall we? I hope you'll give it some serious consideration before making your decision on whether or not you'll be leaving the Nie clan to join the Spiritual Treasure sect.”

“Of course,” Nie Donghai replied.

Soon, they all followed Li Fan and Jiang Lingzhu into the Nie clan.

Seeing them leave, the crowd of onlookers lost their interest and gradually dispersed.

However, the series of incidents that had happened at the main gate of the Nie clan were exaggerated and spiced up as they rapidly spread.

Before long, all of Black Cloud City knew about the Cloudsoaring sect and the Spiritual Treasure sect's fight over Nie Tian.

As a result, the name Nie Tian became known all over Black Cloud City.

Pan Bai from the Spiritual Treasure sect personally came for Nie Tian, and was even willing to bring Nie Donghai and Nie Qian back to the sect.

Meanwhile, the Cloudsoaring sect forced Nie Beichuan to abdicate and hinted for the Nie clan to make Nie Donghai the clanmaster again. Not only did they completely ignore the collapse of the mine, they even broke a sect rule that had been around for decades by admitting Nie Tian before he reached the ninth level of Qi Refining.

For decades, never had a child of the three clans in Black Cloud City received such grand treatment.

Neither Nie Tian's mother, who was widely acknowledged as an extremely talented youngster, nor An Shiyi from the An clan received such a sensational reception when they were admitted.

Many had suspicions in their hearts, not understanding what extraordinary talent the seemingly ordinary Nie Tian had demonstrated that made the Cloudsoaring sect and Spiritual Treasure sect openly fight for him.

“Nie Tian’s cultivation talent is really that outstanding?”

Inside the Yun clan...

Having received the grievous news about Yun Song’s death, Yun Zhiguo emptily dragged himself back into his room.

Inside, Yuan Qiuying had already learned from her informants about the odd things that had happened in front of the Nie clan gate.

“Song’er died in the Green Illusion dimension. How come that brat didn’t?!” Yuan Qiuying seemed to have gone mad, as she smashed all of the vases and jars in the house.

Face haggard, Yun Zhiguo stared blankly at her as she went out of control.

“Good-for-nothing! Everyone from the Yun clan is good-for-nothing!” Yuan Qiuying stormed to his side and started to throw punches and kicks at him while yelling, “Yun Zhiguo! If you don’t have Nie Tian and that slut Nie Qian killed, I won’t forgive you for the rest of my life!”

Yun Zhiguo stared at Yuan Qiuying, who was baring her fangs and brandishing her claws like a crazy shrew. Suddenly, intense regret filled his heart.

He regretted that he had divorced Nie Qian and married the

shrew, under the pressure from his clan.

Without Yuan Qiuying, the Yun clan and the Nie clan would still be friends, and he wouldn't have had to endure this woman's abuse on a daily basis.

Only until now did he finally realize how good Nie Qian had been to him.

Deep down, he knew that Nie Tian would eventually choose one of the two sects, and his future path of cultivation would be bright and promising.

For Nie Tian, Pan Bai personally came, and Jiang Zhisu broke the rules that the sect had adhered to for decades. All of this signified that there was definitely something special about Nie Tian.

The Nie clan would inevitably reverse their misfortune because of him. If the Yun clan ever dared to make a move on the Nie clan in the future, it would undoubtedly attract retaliation from the Cloudsoaring sect.

“Wrong... I couldn't have been more wrong...” he moaned inwardly.

Meanwhile...

Li Fan and Pan Bai were sitting in the Nie clan's great meeting hall, exchanging words gracefully with teacups in their hand.



Pan Tao stood next to Nie Tian. With a low voice, he said, “Nie Tian, whatever the Cloudsoaring sect can offer you, the Spiritual Treasure sect can also offer you. Others don’t know about your special talent, but I do. If you go to the Cloudsoaring sect, you might not be able to make the best use of your talent. You might as well join the Spiritual Treasure sect, so that we brothers can fight side by side again.”

Nie Tian rubbed his head and forced a smile onto his face. “About that... let me thank you first. But too much is going on, and I’m still muddle-headed right now. Let me think about it.”

“Pan Tao!” Jiang Lingzhu moved over and gave him a fierce glare. “What are you saying to him?”

After that, she turned to Nie Tian and said, “My father already gave his consent. All of the problems with your clan will be solved. After all, the Nie clan has a close connection with the Cloudsoaring sect. Don’t let Pan Tao mess with your head.”

Confused, Nie Tian asked, “I don’t understand why your father is willing to break the rules for me.”

He and Pan Tao had communicated a lot in the Green Illusion dimension, therefore it was understandable that Pan Tao knew about his abilities and thus persuaded his father to come to Black Cloud City for him.

However, he only displayed his strength once in Jiang Lingzhu’s

presence, by forcing Yu Tong to retreat.

He didn't feel that it was possible for Jiang Lingzhu to persuade her father to break the rules just because of this.

He had a hunch that Jiang Zhisu harbored an ulterior motive, which was why he was making an exception for him.

In fact, Jiang Lingzhu also harbored certain suspicions. "I also don't know why he made an exception for you. However, it was truly my father's wish. You don't need to worry about that. Since my father has spoken, there definitely won't be a problem."

Nie Tian smiled wryly and said, "I need some time to think. Plus, I want to see what my aunt and grandfather think."

Although the three of them were also in the great hall, there was a distance between them and the grown-ups. Furthermore, there wasn't place for them to sit, so they could only whisper to each other while standing.

In the main seats, Li Fan and Pan Bai had been chatting about the monumental events which had taken place in the Green Illusion dimension, as well as the decisions that the four sects had made regarding the revenge that they were about to take on the Blood sect and the Ghost sect.

Nie Donghai and An Rong didn't say a word, but rather listened attentively the entire time.

Nie Tian and the others were growing impatient by the time they finally ended the pleasantries. Li Fan and Pan Bai exchanged a glance, and then Li Fan said, “About Nie Tian’s issue, how about we let them decide?”

Pan Bai smiled and nodded. “I agree.”

Only until then did Li Fan turn to Nie Donghai and say, “Mr. Nie, about what happened before... because of what happened to my junior martial sister, some sect elders were discontent with the Nie clan, and the things that they did were a bit excessive. However, the Nie clan and the Cloudsoaring sect have worked together for so many years. We know each other. I can’t promise you too much, but I can assure you that in the future, the Cloudsoaring sect will definitely be fair and impartial towards the issues in the Nie clan!”

With these words, Li Fan halted for a moment, his expression becoming solemn and serious.

“Also... If Nie Tian chooses to join the Cloudsoaring sect, I guarantee you that the treatment he’s going to receive will be completely different from Nie Xian’s and Nie Han’s.

“Someone living in the mountain behind Cloudsoaring Peak had set his mind on Nie Tian, and wants to take Nie Tian as his disciple.”

Upon hearing these words, Jiang Lingzhu couldn’t help but exclaim, “Ahhh?!”

Nie Donghai was immediately enlivened, and ecstasy spread out all over his face. Without waiting for anyone else to say anything, he hastily nodded his head and said, "Sure! Sure! You can take Nie Tian to the Cloudsoaring sect any time!" He seemed to fear that Li Fan might take back his words.

Even Pan Bai's expression slightly changed after hearing Li Fan's words.

He gazed deeply at Nie Tian, and then looked over towards Pan Tao, as he realized that his son was every bit as good as he was when it came to judging talent.

For the person in the mountain behind Cloudsoaring Peak to make such a decision meant that there had to be something uncommon about Nie Tian!

It was also at that moment that he realized it had become certain that Nie Tian would step into the Cloudsoaring sect.

However, he didn't feel frustrated.

He knew that even if Nie Tian didn't choose the Spiritual Treasure sect, after everything that had happened, Nie Tian would still be grateful towards Pan Tao.

If there were no mishaps, under that person's guidance, Nie Tian would skyrocket in the Cloudsoaring sect.

As long as Nie Tian could remember what Pan Tao had done for him, his trip would be worth it.

“Nie Tian!” Nie Donghai said loudly. “What are you waiting for? Thank Uncle Li!”

Nie Tian bowed and said, “Thank you, Uncle Li.”

Li Fan laughed. “I’ll give you three days. After three days, I’ll take you to Cloudsoaring Mountain.”

“I understand.”

# Chapter 87: The Center of Attention

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During the following three days, Nie Tian showed Pan Tao around Black Cloud City.

After Nie Donghai decided for Nie Tian to join the Cloudsoaring sect, Pan Tao's father, Pan Bai, had returned with An Rong to the An clan for a temporary visit.

Meanwhile, Li Fan and Jiang Lingzhu stayed in the Nie clan to wait for Nie Tian to get ready to leave for the Cloudsoaring sect.

Although three days was a short period of time, the efficiency of the Nie clan elders was extremely amazing.

The next day, Nie Yaozu the other elders and declared that Nie Beichuan's position as clanmaster would be removed due to his dereliction of duty with regards to the mining accident.

On that afternoon, under Li Fan's observance, the Nie clan elders elected Nie Donghai to be their clanmaster again.

On the other hand, Nie Beichuan and Nie Nanshan spent the three days mostly in their rooms, totally dispirited and no longer daring to interfere with clan affairs.

Li Fan was like a giant mountain weighing down on the two brothers. As long as he was still in the Nie clan, they could only follow his words obediently without the slightest thoughts of

revolting.

The Nie clan members who had treated Nie Donghai and Nie Qian coldly in the past, started to fight for their favor once again. At the same time, Nie Donghai moved back into the big mansion which represented the clanmaster's status.

Pan Tao knew that he wouldn't be able to turn Nie Tian's decision around. Therefore, after touring in Black Cloud City for several days with him, he went back to the An clan to prepare for his return with his father to the Spiritual Treasure sect.

This morning, just as the first cracks of light emerged, Nie Tian went to the square where the clan members trained.

On the square, many Nie clan youngsters were sitting cross-legged with their hands on their knees, breathing the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth. Others were moving their fists and bodies as they practiced spiritual techniques.

Nie Hong and Nie Yuan were also sitting there, cultivating quietly.

However, unlike before, the other Nie clan youngsters now intentionally kept their distance from these two, and chose other spots to cultivate at.

If it were three days ago, wherever they went, the other youngsters would automatically gather around them, attempting

to gain their favor.

Nie Tian had never come back to the square again since he had injured Nie Hong.

Now that he suddenly appeared, many of the cultivating Nie clan youths were shocked, and gazed towards him with a mixture of surprise, envy, and respect.

“All of you, go back to your cultivation!” Wu Tao shouted with his low-pitched voice.

The agitated youngsters gradually quieted down after hearing his rebuke.

However, their eyes were still locked onto Nie Tian, who walked towards Wu Tao.

In merely three days, Nie Tian’s name had spread to every corner of Black Cloud City.

Even in the nearby Dim Star City, Frost Stone City, and Bone Shatter City, many people were talking about him.

Because of him, Pan Bai from the Spiritual Treasure sect had personally come to the Nie clan; because of him, the Cloudsoaring sect had broken a rule that had stood for decades, and took him in before he had reached the ninth level of Qi Refining.



To every one of the Nie clan youngsters in the square, Nie Tian was a legend.

They couldn't understand how Nie Tian, who, a year ago, used to train with them on the same square and fight with Nie Hong and Nie Yuan all the time, could improve so drastically, and attain such a miraculous success in such a short time.

Nie Tian bowed respectfully towards Wu Tao. "Mr. Wu, thank you for taking care of me all these years. I will soon be going to the Cloudsoaring sect, and I have specially come today to say goodbye to you."

When his grandfather and aunt were being forced by Nie Beichuan and his allies to go to the Cloudsoaring sect to admit their guilt, the entire Nie clan had intentionally hid it from him.

Only Wu Tao had taken a great risk and secretly informed him.

Furthermore, when he previously trained on the square, Wu Tao had also treated him well, unlike the other clan members who had treated him coldly because his grandfather had lost his power within the clan.

Therefore, he was there to express his gratitude towards him before he left the Nie clan.

"Oh, there's no need." Wu Tao hurriedly went forward to help

him up.

After that, Wu Tao looked deeply into his eyes, smiled broadly, and said, “I always knew that you were different, even though I couldn’t figure out what exactly it was. I always felt that you would be taken in by the Cloudsoaring sect, just like Nie Xian.” With these words, he paused for a moment before continuing, “But I underestimated you...”

Both of them were children of the Nie clan, and both were regarded highly by Wu Tao. Nie Xian had been formally accepted by the Cloudsoaring sect after he stepped into the ninth level of Qi Refining.

However, Nie Tian was different.

Not only had Pan Bai from the Spiritual Treasure sect come for him, but the Cloudsoaring sect even broke a rule that had been enforced for decades for him.

Wu Tao also knew that Nie Tian was actually the reason why the Cloudsoaring sect was willing to drop the matter of the collapsed mine, and why Nie Beichuan was removed from his position, allowing Nie Donghai to regain his former position as clanmaster.

Because of Nie Tian, the whole situation of the Nie clan had been turned around!

The shocking potential that he had exhibited and the changes he

had caused far exceeded Nie Xian.

“Perhaps something happened in the Green Illusion dimension...” Wu Tao speculated inwardly, his heart filled with mixed feelings.

Nie You, who had her hair wrapped up in a braid on top of her head, curiously looked at him and asked with a naive voice. “Elder Brother Tian, what stage are you at now?”

The innocent Nie You had always stood by Nie Tian, and had accused Nie Hong and Nie Yuan for being shameless every time they battled Nie Tian.

“The eighth level of Qi Refining,” replied Nie Tian, smiling.

“Ahhh?!” Nie You exclaimed.

A lot of the other youngsters also seemed astonished after hearing his answer.

They could still remember that Nie Tian was at the third level of Qi Refining when he fought with Nie Hong last time.

It had only been a year, but Nie Tian had already exceeded everyone’s expectations and reached the eighth level. Such a rapid advancement was simply unimaginable.

“Elder Brother Tian, you’re so awesome!” Nie You’s face was full of admiration. “No wonder the Cloudsoaring sect would make an exception for you.”

A lot of young girls and boys of the Nie clan cast amazed looks at him, as they chatted and sighed in admiration.

“From the third to the eighth level in a year... This kind of progress is way too terrifying.”

“Well, it seems that there is a reason why the Cloudsoaring sect made an exception for him.”

“It might be that they value his potential.”

Only Nie Yuan and Nie Hong were still sitting off in the distance, looking rather grim.

They didn’t say a word, assuming that Nie Tian had come especially to humiliate them.

Sure enough, Nie Tian began to walk slowly towards them after thanking Wu Tao.

All of a sudden, everyone in the square fell into silence.

The expressions on their faces seemed as if they were expecting a good show.

Both Nie Hong and Nie Yuan lowered their heads and gritted their teeth, not daring to meet Nie Tian's gaze.

Since their fathers had already warned them against starting conflicts with Nie Tian, then no matter how Nie Tian insulted them, they could only bear it; they absolutely weren't allowed to resist.

Nie Tian was obviously different from the other disciples that had been admitted by the Cloudsoaring sect.

Nie Tian's success was already immutable.

Nowadays, not a single person in the entire Nie clan would dare to mess with Nie Tian, not to mention those two youngsters.

After all, if they were to be admitted by the Cloudsoaring sect in the future, and Nie Tian were to target them after they joined the sect, their life would be miserable.

For sake of their own future, they could only endure whatever was coming.

Therefore, they had already prepared themselves for Nie Tian to come over and humiliate them.

Meanwhile...

On top of the high pavilion that represented the status of clanmaster, Nie Donghai and Li Fan, who had been conversing, suddenly stopped.

They were leaning against the stone balcony, overlooking the square underneath, before their attention was caught by Nie Tian.

“Hmm...”

They saw Nie Tian arriving in front of Nie Hong and Nie Yuan.

After a moment of hesitation, Nie Tian said, “The conflicts between our grandfathers have nothing to do with us. Although we’ve been battling over the years, I’ve never considered you two as my enemies.

“I’ll continue my cultivation in the Cloudsoaring sect. I hope, however, that our matches won’t stop because of that, and that they won’t be limited to within the Nie clan.

“I hope that I’ll soon see the both of you in the Cloudsoaring sect. By that time, I’ll accept your challenges at any time.

“Thanks for honing me for all these years. Because of you, I strove to get stronger, and eventually earned the chance to enter the Cloudsoaring sect.

“I hope the two of you can also become disciples of the Cloudsoaring sect.

“By that time, we will fight in the Cloudsoaring sect, instead of the Nie clan.”

What he said was true. He had never hated Nie Hong or Nie Yuan. They were also only eleven, the same age as Nie Tian, and they actually hadn't been tainted by the despicable minds of Nie Beichuan and Nie Nanshan yet.

Without the countless battles they had fought against each other, Nie Tian wouldn't have been able to improve unceasingly, and he wouldn't have been sharpened into a treasured blade that emanated brilliant light.

All of the people who were watching, waiting for Nie Tian to humiliate Nie Hong and Nie Yuan, let out exclamations of surprise. “Huh?!”

Wu Tao also looked greatly surprised.

Even Li Fan and Nie Donghai, who were high up on the balcony, appreciated Nie Tian's behavior with surprised expressions on their faces.

Nie Hong and Nie Yuan, who had planned for the worst-case scenario, raised their heads to stare blankly at Nie Tian, flabbergasted by his words.

They didn't see the least bit of a sneer in Nie Tian's eyes, or the intent to inflict humiliation that they thought to be there. All they saw was sincerity.

A moment later, Nie Hong snapped out of his daze, as the issues that had been weighing on his mind were instantly lifted. He waved his clenched fist towards Nie Tian and said, "You'll see! I'll definitely make it into the Cloudsoaring sect. By that time, I'll defeat you, and let you know that I'm not a bit weaker than you!"

"So will I!" Nie Yuan said loudly.

With a grin, Nie Tian nodded. "Good. I'll wait for you in the Cloudsoaring sect!"

"Just wait for us!"

Then, Nie Hong said in a low voice, "Congratulations..."

Nie Tian put on a heartfelt smile.

On the stone pavilion, Li Fan turned to Nie Donghai and said, "You taught him well."

"Yes, all the things that I have done over the years finally paid off." Nie Donghai no longer hid his feelings and his face was filled with pride.



Li Fan nodded slowly, and spoke while seemingly thinking to himself, “I wonder what happened to him in the Green Illusion dimension. But from the look of it, what he got from the Green Illusion dimension was way more than just the progress in cultivation. It seems his mind and the way he handles issues also transcended... That kind of growth is even more precious compared to the growth in cultivation.”

Nie Donghai laughed gently, feeling as if the pressure that he had endured for many years had been completely been lifted today. Now, he felt incomparably light.

Face solemn, Li Fan said with a serious tone, “From now on, the Nie clan will sorrow as he sorrows, decline as he declines. It will rejoice as he rejoices, and soar as he soars.”

# Chapter 88: Walking on the Clouds

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Deep into the night.

The majestic Cloudsoaring Mountain stood tall and erect, like a gigantic stone pillar piercing into the clouds.

At the foot of the mountain, Nie Tian looked up at it, breathing deeply and filled with emotion.

“Lingzhu, you go ahead,” Li Fan said casually.

Jiang Lingzhu turned around to look at Nie Tian. With a complicated expression, she said, “What about him?”

Li Fan answered, “Master has instructed me to bring him directly to the back of the mountain.”

Jiang Lingzhu was taken aback. “Really?”

Li Fan laughed bitterly. “I wish he was kidding. Ahh... the idea of having such a young martial uncle also bothered me...”

“You lucky dog!” Jiang Lingzhu said, glaring at Nie Tian. Sounding annoyed, she continued, “I don’t care. I won’t call you martial uncle no matter what. You’re not even my age!”

With these words, she went along the long and narrow stone

steps towards the top of the Cloudsoaring Mountain.

Nie Tian scratched his head, looking confused. “What’s going on, uncle Li?”

“You can call me uncle Li today, but from tomorrow on, I’ll be your martial nephew.” Helplessness appeared on Li Fan’s face, but he didn’t explain anything more in detail. Instead, he said, “Let’s go, to the back of the mountain.”

Full of questions, Nie Tian followed along.

An hour later, the sky had turned completely dark, and a bright, round moon gradually rose up into the night sky.

Behind Cloudsoaring Mountain, Nie Tian and Li Fan appeared at the foot of a mountain that was slightly shorter than Cloudsoaring Mountain.

Li Fan pointed to a stone path which led towards the mountaintop, and said to Nie Tian, “This is as far as I can go. You just have to follow this stone path and walk to the end of it. Someone will be waiting for you at the mountaintop. And that person will be your master in the Cloudsoaring sect.”

“What?” Nie Tian was confused. “Why does he live in the back, and not on Cloudsoaring Mountain? From what I’ve heard, new disciples are supposed to attend some kind of ceremony, aren’t they?”

“You’re different.” Li Fan explained, shaking his head. “You’ll see. Many rules of the Cloudsoaring sect won’t apply to you.”

His words left Nie Tian completely confused.

“Go ahead. Follow the stone path to the mountaintop. Soon, you’ll understand how lucky you are, kid.” Without another word, Li Fan turned and left.

Under the moonlight, Nie Tian’s gaze followed the long, rugged stone path upwards to the top of the peak, his heart filled with all kinds of emotions.

After stewing in his thoughts for a while, he still couldn’t figure out what was waiting for him, thus he just followed Li Fan’s instructions and walked along the stone path up the mountain, bathed in moonlight.

The stone path was long and rugged, and he spent the entire night climbing. By the time he got to the top, it was already daybreak, and he was exhausted.

At the end of the stone path was a stretch of glossy stone ground, atop which were a few thatched cottages.

Completely worn out, Nie Tian breathed deeply to calm himself. Before he could examine the surroundings carefully, a voice echoed out from within one of the thatched cottages, “You’re here.”

Nie Tian was taken aback. “You are?”

“Come.” The person’s voice was filled with tranquility, as if he had just woken up. “Watch your step.”

Subconsciously, Nie Tian looked towards the glossy stone ground under his feet.

He saw dots of bright light floating out, which quickly stretched into lines and interweaved into a gigantic grid.

In the next moment, waves of soul-shaking fluctuations were unleashed from within the grid, causing Nie Tian’s expression to flicker.

Then he noticed that the clusters of clouds floating near the mountain peak were being attracted as they converged rapidly onto the stone ground under his feet.

Before long, the clusters of clouds seemed to have turned into an ash-gray carpet, spreading out and covering the entire stone ground, with the only visible thing being a carpet of clouds.

At that moment, he felt as if he was standing on top of a sea of clouds, in the highest of the heavens.

“Take your time, and walk to me step by step.” Submerged in the

dense clouds, the voice that echoed out from the thatched cottage sounded even more ethereal.

Nie Tian glanced around. All he could see was a sea of thick clouds and a thatched cottage that seemed to be floating on top of it, with no mountains or ground visible any longer.

This was something he had never experienced before, and thus he instantly grew incomparably cautious.

No longer able to locate the stone ground beneath his feet, he feared that he might fall from the clouds into the heart of the mountain and die.

He stared closely at the thatched cottage and pondered for a while with his eyes narrowed. Convinced that the stone ground was still there between him and the thatched cottage, he finally took his first trembling step forward.

BOOM!

The moment his foot landed, a surge of energy fluctuations entered his body through the bottom of his foot, which then turned into millions of strands of energy that swam upwards along his legs.

He immediately experienced soreness and numbness all over. When he unleashed his psychic power to examine his body, he discovered that those strands of energy seemed to have found an

outlet and rushed forth into his mind.

Shortly after, he felt muddleheaded as he started to lose his balance and stagger.

Every muscle and meridian inside of him seemed to be invaded by the strange, fine strands of energy, and gradually, he started to feel a rise in his body temperature.

“Second step.” The voice once again echoed out from within the thatched cottage.

Muddleheaded and dizzy, Nie Tian followed the person’s instructions and slowly took his second step.

BOOM!

Another surge of energy rushed into his sole, reaching every one of his bones and limbs and filling his entire body.

His body suddenly expanded out like a inflated balloon, just as what had previously occurred in the Green Illusion dimension when he had tried to refine the blood he had absorbed.

A heart-wrenching pain came from within each and every one of his pores, which grew increasingly unbearable and eventually made him cry out loud. “Ahh!”

While he was roaring wildly, sweat started spilling out from his pores, which... was mixed with filth that was being discharged from within his body.

“Continue!” The voice rang out again.

Nie Tian struggled to resist the acute pain. Jaw clenched, he took another step forward.

With every step he took, astonishing energy would break out from within the clusters of clouds beneath his feet, rush inside of him without meeting any obstacle, and wander about in his flesh and bones, as if it was attempting to stimulate him!

When he took the seventh step, the pain built up to the point where he was on the verge of losing consciousness.

His legs felt as heavy as mountains, and he found it almost impossible to take even one more step forward.

Therefore, he stopped.

Surprisingly, the voice that had kept urging him didn't echo out, as if it was waiting for something.

HUFF! HUFF! HUFF!

Nie Tian panted heavily, as if the most effortless action of



breathing had now become too consuming for him.

By this point, he felt as if his body didn't belong to him any more; he was so muddleheaded that he could no longer feel the existence of his body.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

It was also at that very moment that he experienced an anomaly in his heartbeat, which was growing increasingly strong and rapid!

Standing among the clouds, Nie Tian exclaimed inwardly, fearing that his secret was about to be revealed. "Oh, damn!"

This kind of situation had only occurred to help him reverse a desperate situation, allowing him to battle on with a new, unknown strength.

It was no exception this time!

He had been exhausted to death and on the verge of passing out, but as his heart pounded increasingly vigorously, he resumed command of his own body.

It seemed as if his body was reactivated by a new kind of strength!

Having stopped for a while, the voice suddenly rang out once

again. “Continue!!”

However, this time, Nie Tian could clearly identify excitement in that voice.

# Chapter 89: Tempering the Self

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## Cloudsoaring Mountain...

Standing on the mountaintop, surrounded by a boundless white fog, the master of the Cloudsoaring sect, Jiang Zhisu, was gazing at the back of the mountain, his green robes fluttering against the wind.

Jiang Lingzhu and Li Fan stood beside him, and just like him, they were also looking at the back of the mountain, their eyes filled with disbelief.

“The flow of the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth seems to have changed...” said Jiang Zhisu.

After staring for a while, Li Fan said, “Based on my calculations, Nie Tian ought to have reached the top already.”

Jiang Zhisu said gently, “It’s begun.”

“Father, why did martial granduncle chose Nie Tian?” Jiang Lingzhu asked, puzzled.

Li Fan furrowed his brow and said, “Actually, I find it quite strange myself. I failed to spot any special cultivation talent on him. Pan Bai of the Spiritual Treasure sect is well-known for his ability to recognize talent, and since he set his mind on Nie Tian, he must have something unique. But, even if that was true, it was

still very unlikely for martial granduncle to pick him, right?”

Jiang Zhisu shook his head and said, “I also have no idea why. In martial uncle’s entire life, he has only taken in a total of three disciples, with Nie Tian being the third. You probably have heard of the first two, and know what cultivation stage they’re at and their current status.”

Li Fan’s heart was filled with veneration upon hearing these words.

Jiang Zhisu remained silent for a while before saying, “Martial uncle hasn’t made a breakthrough in years, and his time... is about to run out. If there are no surprises, Nie Tian is very likely his last disciple. Actually, I originally assumed that he wouldn’t take in any more disciples; who would have thought that he would set his eyes on Nie Tian. However, it’s our sect’s fortune that martial uncle has taken in a new disciple.”

“I wonder how many steps he’ll be able to take.” Curiosity was written across Li Fan’s face.

Eyes narrowed, Jiang Zhisu used his soul to sense the flow of the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth in the vicinity of the Cloudsoaring Mountain. “The first two of martial uncle’s disciples both turned out to be more successful than their master. I hope that Nie Tian will too. After today, we’ll have a clearer understanding of Nie Tian’s potential.”

Upon hearing his words, both Li Fan and Jiang Lingzhu’s eyes

brimmed with admiration, as if they knew what Nie Tian was experiencing at that moment.

...

On the back of the mountain...

Having walked seven steps, Nie Tian couldn't move his legs even the least bit.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

Just as he was catching his breath, rapid and vigorous heartbeats once again sounded out from within his chest.

Nie Tian, who was on the verge of losing consciousness, remained where he was and used his soul to sense the changes inside of him.

He discovered that countless strands of unknown energy were roaming about inside of him, carrying pure and refined power, as they constantly entered and exited his flesh, bones, and internal organs.

He no longer forced himself to take steps forward, but rather attempted to use the Qi Refining Incantation to control the strands of energy.

As soon as he started, he could keenly feel the numerous strands of energy frantically surging forth into his spiritual sea.

In only a flash, his spiritual sea was brimming with spiritual power, but the mighty spiritual energy in him was much stronger than the energy he had acquired from the spirit beast meat in the Green Illusion dimension!

When he tried to use the Qi Refining Incantation to expand his spiritual sea, he discovered that his spiritual sea seemed to be ripped apart and sewn back together, expanding rapidly.

Not only that, but along with the acceleration of his heartbeat, he gradually gained control of the strands of energy that were originally rampaging uncontrollably in his flesh, bones, and internal organs.

Before long, he sensed that the energy was disappearing at an astonishing speed.

He was actually absorbing it!

Before long, he snapped out of the muddleheaded state he had been in, and regained command of his own body, even though he was still feeling incomparably sore and painful.

“Continue!” The urging voice once again echoed out from within the thatched cottage.

Nie Tian gritted his teeth and took another step forward.

The moment he stretched out his leg, he felt drops of murky sweat flowing out from his body, dripping down as he moved along.

THUMP!

When his foot landed on the ground, another surge of energy flowed into him through his sole.

As soon as it entered Nie Tian's foot, the surge of energy once again split into countless strands of energy, dispersing into every corner of his body.

THUMP! THUMP!

He took another two steps in quick succession, and the energy which rushed forth into his body once again became frantic and disorderly.

He had just restored clarity to his mind, and yet was once again thrown into bewilderment as a flesh-rending pain burst out within him, causing him to stagger to the point where he almost fell over.

It was at that point that he realized that the amount of energy that his body was able to bear had once again reached its limit!

He stopped moving again, and then used the Qi Refining Incantation to pull the abundant energy inward.

CRACKLE!

A strange sound rang out from his bones, as if his joints were cheering, his blood was surging in high spirits, and his internal organs were roaring wildly!

Soon, he discovered that the energy, which had filled his spiritual sea to the brim, seemed to have completely transformed his spiritual sea after a violent upheaval.

After examining himself with rapt attention, ecstasy appeared on his face. “The ninth level of Qi Refining!”

He had spent a very long time to expand his spiritual sea bit by bit in the Green Illusion dimension before eventually reaching the eighth level of Qi Refining. At that time, he was fully aware that there was still a very long road ahead, and it could be months before he would reach the ninth level of Qi Refining.

He never expected that simply by taking a few steps within the sea of clouds, his spiritual sea would finish upgrading, and he would step into the ninth level of Qi Refining just like that!

CRACKLE!

All of his bones continued to make cracking sounds, and at the



same time, huge amounts of sweat mixed with filth continued to pour out of his pores.

Along with the outflow of the sweat, he suddenly felt his muscles, meridians, and veins grow more powerful and resilient, his bones become as hard as steel, and his internal organs fill with endless strength.

Surprised and elated, he released his psychic awareness in an attempt to probe the surroundings.

His psychic power was like tentacles stretching out from his soul, traveling at an unimaginably high speed, extending into every direction to cover a 150 meters radius!

Within the range of 150 meters, the flow of the wind, the surging power within the clouds, the swaying reeds on top of the thatched cottages, and the ice-cold moisture of the stone ground all became clear to him.

At the same time, a terrifyingly strong life fluctuation, which pulsed in the thatched cottage in front of him, was reflected into his mind!

Closing his eyes, he used his soul to sense it...

Within that thatched cottage, there seemed to be an entity that resembled a blazing sun, releasing heaven-shaking and earth-shattering life fluctuations.

He immediately felt dwarfed by such a formidable power. He also felt that with a look or just a thought, that life within the thatched cottage would be able to instantly reduce him into nothing more than slag.

Back in the Green Illusion dimension, he had also used his unique psychic awareness to detect the Lurker Lizard and Frost Python. The fleshly aura and signs of life of those two spirit beasts had been slightly stronger than Yu Tong's, yet they had already made him feel immeasurably weak.

However, compared to the life fluctuations within the thatched cottage, they seemed ridiculously insignificant, as if they were bugs and this was a dragon, as if they were fireflies and this was the sun.

“It's so powerful!” he exclaimed inwardly. “Is that... really a human being?”

“Yee?!” A muttering sound echoed out from within the thatched cottage, “Such considerable psychic power at the Qi Refining stage... Not bad...”

After halting for a moment, the man in the thatched cottage called out, “Focus, keep going!”

Upon hearing the words, Nie Tian's psychic power instantly returned to his soul, as if it was pushed back by a formless, giant hand.

With a shock to his soul, he snapped out of his psychic activities and realized that it wasn't the time to observe that person.

However, after experiencing a period of bewilderment, his body seemed to have become adapted again and the strands of energy that had rushed forth into his body seemed to have been consumed by more than half.

Therefore, he took another step forward.

Just like that, he walked and stopped. Step by step, he gradually moved towards that thatched cottage.

He didn't pay attention to how long it had been, or how much energy he had absorbed. He even forgot how many steps he had taken.

In the end, when he reached the door of the thatched cottage, he raised his head, and realized that a full moon already hung high in the sky.

"Come in!" the voice echoed out again.

# Chapter 90: The Ninth Realm of the Domain of the Falling Stars

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Below Nie Tian's feet, the clouds rapidly dissipated, and soon he was able to see the stone ground again.

Standing in front of the thatched cottage, he could feel that there were still countless strands of energy roaming about inside of him, yet his pounding heartbeat had returned to normal.

Staring at the thatched cottage, he suddenly felt somewhat nervous, and thus stood there in hesitation.

Previously, he perceived that the person inside the thatched cottage... was an existence whose strength incredibly strong, the likes of which he had never met before.

"Come in," the person urged once again.

Hearing his words, Nie Tian didn't hesitate any further. He lifted the cottage's curtain and strode in.

Upon entering, he immediately knelt and kowtowed three times, saying, "Greetings, master."

When he previously arrived at the foot of the mountain, he had learned from Li Fan that the person he was going to meet would be his future master in the Cloudsoaring sect.

By urging him to step towards the cottage, that person had bestowed millions of strands of energy upon him, which were clearly an enormous fortune to him.

If by now he didn't understand that this person had good intentions, then he would be undeserving of the Cloudsoaring sect's breaking of the rules for him, much less the favor of this mysterious person.

“Smart kid.”

Within the humble thatched cottage, an old man that resembled a bag of bones sat quietly on a prayer mat with both of his hands tucked up in the opposite sleeves, sizing Nie Tian up with intense interest.

The old man was plain looking. No matter his clothes or his figure, there was nothing eye-catching about him.

Only his eyes were different, which seemed to be brimming with the thirst for knowledge, constantly pondering certain profound questions, and diligently and tirelessly chasing after the answers.

“Raise your head,” the old man said softly.

After hearing his words, Nie Tian slowly lifted up his bowed head and finally summoned enough courage to look the old man in the eye.

With a brief smile, the old man said amiably, “My name is Wu Ji. From today on, I’ll be your master. Including you, I have a total of three disciples. When you reach a certain level, you’ll naturally come to know about your two senior martial brothers. There’s no need for me to tell you about them.

“The only thing I’ll say about them is that they have already surpassed me.

“I hope that like them you will too, one day, step out of this heaven and earth to go and pursue the things that I once longed for.”

Nie Tian was flabbergasted. “Step out of this heaven and earth?”

Wu Ji’s face was calm. “By stepping out of this heaven and earth, I don’t mean through an inter-spacial teleportation portal. I’m talking about soaring across the river of stars by relying on your own strength. The heaven and earth in which we reside is just an insignificant realm in the vast galaxy. Its name is the Realm of Flame Heaven, which is the ninth realm of the Domain of the Falling Stars.

“The ninth realm? The Domain of the Falling Stars?” Confusion stretched across Nie Tian’s face.

Wu Ji nodded. “That’s right, the land that we’re standing on is the ninth realm of the Domain of the Falling Stars. And within Domain of the Falling Stars, there are altogether nine realms

which are similar to the Realm of Flame Heaven.”

Nie Tian’s jaw dropped as he stared at Wu Ji wide-eyed.

With merely a few sentences, Wu Ji had practically overturned everything Nie Tian knew about this world, and shook his beliefs to an incredible extent.

“Of course.” Face serious, Wu Ji continued, “telling you about all these things right now is indeed a bit too early. But I have faith that your future will not be limited to the Realm of Flame Heaven. I’m telling you all these things because I want you to know that the unmeasured vastness of the entire galaxy far exceeds your imagination.

“One day, you’ll step out of the Realm of Flame Heaven and travel freely between the realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars, just like your two senior martial brothers.”

Immediately, a longing was born in Nie Tian’s heart.

“Just like the Realm of Flame Heaven, each and every one of the realms of the Domain of the Falling Stars is inhabited by numerous powerful Qi warriors. However, the number of Qi warriors in the Realm of Flame Heaven is far fewer compared to the other eight realms.

“In the entire Realm of Flame Heaven, there are only seven Qi warrior forces that can be considered worth mentioning.

“You probably know about them. They are the Spiritual Treasure sect, Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, Mystic Mist sect, Ghost sect, Blood sect, and Hell sect.

“These seven forces are split up into two alliances, with the Ghost sect, Blood sect, and Hell sect on one side, and the Spiritual Treasure sect, Grayvale sect, Mystic Mist sect, and us on the other.”

Inside the thatched cottage, Wu Ji’s ethereal voice unceasingly drifted about. He didn’t talk too much about the Domain of the Falling Stars and the other eight realms, but rather focused on matters of the Realm of Flame Heaven.

Nie Tian listened attentively, engraving everything Wu Ji had said in his mind.

Wu Ji had opened a brand new door for him, allowing him to gradually understand about his insignificance and the fact that the Realm of Flame Heaven he was in was merely the ninth realm of the Domain of the Falling Stars.

During that day, Wu Ji didn’t give any introduction regarding cultivation, but only explained to him in detail the distribution of realms, the complicated relationships between different forces, as well as the conflicts between individual Qi warriors.

A very long time passed...



Wu Ji stopped and said, “Go and think over what I have said today. Also, have a good rest to let your body recuperate, and then, observe and learn about the changes in you.

“In the future, I’ll explain to you the relationship between a Qi warrior and the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth, as well as other basic knowledge.

“I won’t impart any spiritual techniques for cultivation before you enter the Lesser Heaven stage. For now, you can just continue to use the Qi Refining Incantation to cultivate your spiritual sea.”

“Got it.” Nie Tian nodded obediently.

Wu Ji examined him silently for a while before asking, “Someone has refined your flesh, blood, and bones before me. Who was he?”

Nie Tian was stunned. Then he contemplated over Wu Ji’s question, trying to figure out what he meant.

“I heard you once had a high fever and lost consciousness for a few days?” Wu Ji’s eyes glittered with bright light.

Nie Tian suddenly remembered and said, “Yes, I did.”

“A foreign doctor treated your fever for seven days, right?” asked Wu Ji.

Nie Tian nodded. “Yeah, he did.”

“What is his name?”

“I believe it’s Hua Mu.”

“Hua Mu?” Wu Ji frowned as he drifted away in thought. After a while, he shook his head and said, “I have never heard this name before. Either it’s a fake name, or... he’s not from the Realm of Flame Heaven.

“There are only a handful in the entire Realm of Flame Heaven who are able to do what he did and practically give you a brand new body.

“I know every one of them and none are named Hua Mu.”

Nie Tian was taken aback. “That foreign doctor helped me refine my flesh, blood, and bones? Is he really... that incredible?”

“Of course, he is.” Wu Ji nodded. “But I don’t know what motivated him to spend so much energy to help you refine your flesh, blood, and bones. That person is definitely beyond ordinary. If he is indeed from one of the other eight realms, then...”

Wu Ji suddenly stopped and started to examine Nie Tian again, as if he was trying to find an answer on Nie Tian.

After a while, he waved his hand, signaling for Nie Tian to leave. “From today on, the third thatched cottage to the left belongs to you. You can go and rest now.”

“Yes, master.” Nie Tian rose to his feet, bowed, and walked out of the room.

Wu Ji’s words were a bit overwhelming for him, and he needed time to digest such a large amount of overturning information.

Furthermore, he was fairly exhausted, and felt the urgent need to get some good sleep.

Inside the room, Wu Ji was still muttering to himself, “Hua Mu...

“It seems like I have to ask a few friends to go investigate in the other eight realms, and see if there is actually a person named Hua Mu... Since this Hua Mu was willing to go through so much trouble to help refine Nie Tian’s body, there must be a reason.

“Could it be that he also saw the potential in Nie Tian and wanted to take him in as a disciple?

“But if he did, how come he didn’t take Nie Tian with him?

“Strange, it’s truly strange.”

# Chapter 91: Half a Year Passes

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Nie Tian spent the next few months cultivating under Wu Ji's guidance on the back mountain of Cloudsoaring Mountain.

Every morning, Wu Ji would instruct him about the origins of Qi warriors and the differences between realms, and also impart to him various secrets and anecdotes of the Realm of Flame Heaven.

From Wu Ji, Nie Tian also learned that the period before one hundred thousand years ago was referred to as the ancient era.

During that time, a variety of races had been established in countless realms. Titans, ancient beasts, and the monarchs of various special races were the overlords of their separate realms.

Humans, on the other hand, were just sheep waiting to be slaughtered, controlled by the stronger races, and were reduced to the powerful races' offerings to the heaven and earth.

Only when the ancient Qi warriors figured out a way to cultivate, and learned how to channel the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth into their spiritual sea, did the human race finally break free from enslavement and rise to prominence.

Wu Ji told him that all living being in this universe had unique talents.

The titans and ancient beasts had been the favored ones from the

moment they came to exist, the reason being that unimaginable, frightening strength lay within their flesh and blood.

As for the monarchs of the various powerful races, they possessed bloodlines that were incomparably strong. Some bloodlines allowed them to interact with the lava from the earth's core, some allowed them to cause great changes to thunder, some contained the profound mysteries of death, and some bloodlines carried endless life.

There were also special races that had been born with mysterious souls, allowing them to float through the dark holes of space like ghosts.

According to Wu Ji, any living creature was able to possess three types of strength, which were spiritual power, bloodline power, and soul power.

Some strong races had the secret laws of heaven and earth within their bloodlines. They would mainly cultivate their bloodline power, and the life force within their flesh and blood would be as strong as the mountain and as abundant as the ocean.

Some other strong races had powerful souls, and their cultivation would be mostly soul-related.

There were also other races that mainly focused on the cultivation of their spiritual sea and spiritual power.

Spiritual power, bloodline power, and soul power were just different manifestations of strength. They all contained boundless mysteries, and possessed the ability to reshape the heaven and earth.

As for the human race, they usually started their cultivation path by cultivating their spiritual power. When they reached a certain stage, they would be able to sense the existence of the soul power and start to comprehend its profundity, and thus start to refine their souls.

Of course, nothing was for sure. Some people were able to keenly sense the existence of psychic power at a very early age.

Psychic power was the earliest form of soul power.

As one's psychic power gradually congealed and became stronger, then by slowly nurturing and refining the soul with it, one would be able to gain a clear understanding of his or her own soul, and from there, begin the path of soul power cultivation.

Due to the special nature of the incantations cultivated by the Ghost sect, they would usually greatly value a person's soul power when they picked disciples.

It was also for that reason that the Ghost sect disciples would often possess outstanding psychic power.

As they proceeded further with their cultivation, they would

usually put more emphasis on the cultivation of their souls. Therefore, the Ghost sect always required their disciples to possess a strong psychic power from the very beginning.

Every morning, Wu Ji would teach Nie Tian about the ancient Qi warriors, the different major races, and the difference between the three types of strength.

Every afternoon, Wu Ji would lecture about the ancient symbols and the scripts of the titans and the ancient beasts; he told Nie Tian that he would find them useful sooner or later if he was to travel outside of the Realm of Flame Heaven.

The ancient symbols were the language the ancient Qi warriors used in ancient times to communicate with the heaven and earth.

The titans' and ancient beasts' scripts were two different languages.

According to Wu Ji, when he had the chance to step out of the Realm of Flame Heaven in the future and visit other realms, he would definitely get to see those two type of scripts and maybe even... encounter titans and ancient beasts.

By that time, his knowledge about those two languages would come in handy and help him make the best out of the situation.

At the very least, he would be able to communicate with those terrifying beings.

Actually, Wu Ji found it surprising that Nie Tian never resented the idea of learning about the scripts of the titans and ancient beasts.

Wu Ji didn't know that when he had introduced the ancient beast script to Nie Tian, the writings reminded him of the stone palace underneath the desert in the Green Illusion dimension.

Every wall and stone column in the stone palace had been engraved with the mysterious writings.

If he had grasped the meanings of the script back then, he would have understood what the writings engraved at the stone palace were talking about.

As for the titans' script...

The first time Wu Ji had told him about the titan's script, he was one hundred percent certain that those mountain-like arms pointing up into the sky in the mysterious land he had been taken to by the dragon bone, belonged to the titans!

Under the ground of the mysterious land must lie quite a few titans that had disappeared from this world for who knew how long.

He had learned the rage punch from one of them. If only he had known this language back then, he would have been able to



uncover many, many more secrets..

Therefore, when it was time to study the languages of the ancient beasts and titans, not only did he not have a problem with it, he was even extremely eager learn about them.

Wu Ji was quite pleased with his hard-working attitude.

During the day, he would learn from Wu Ji about the languages of the two great races, as well as why Qi warriors existed, and the applications of the three types of strength.

In the night, he would cultivate diligently using the Qi Refining Incantation to expand his spiritual sea. In the process, he would take advantage of the spirit stones that Wu Ji had bestowed upon him.

Every few days, a Thunder Beast would descend from the sky and throw him a second grade spirit beast as food.

As soon as it left the food, it would swoop back into the sky before vanishing into the clouds in a flash.

It had been extremely difficult for him to get the meat of a second grade spirit beast in the Green Illusion dimension.

However, after coming to this place, second grade spirit beast meat had become his everyday meal.

Following Wu Ji's instructions, he didn't use the energy produced by the second grade spirit beast meat to expand his spiritual sea.

Instead, he allowed it to naturally disperse into his flesh and merge into his bones and inner organs.

That was because the low grade spirit stones which he used to cultivate during the night already contained enough spiritual energy of the heaven and earth for him to use to gradually expand his spiritual sea.

Time flew... In the blink of an eye, he had already cultivated under Wu Ji's instructions for half a year.

By now, his spiritual sea had expanded to the limits of the ninth level of Qi Refining!

He was only one step away from breaking through the bottleneck and entering the Lesser Heaven stage.

After consuming the meat of second grade spirit beasts for half a year, he had grown taller and even more robust. Moreover, the fluctuations of life within him had become significantly more vigorous than cultivators at the same stage as himself.

His psychic power could now cover a range of 300 meters.

One morning, following his usual routine, Nie Tian once again planned to go to Wu Ji's cottage to listen to him explain matters pertinent to breaking through from the Qi Refining stage into the Lesser Heaven stage.

During the past three days, Wu Ji no longer talked about the respective features of spiritual power, bloodline power, and soul power, but rather focused on instructing him how to break through the bottleneck and step into the Lesser Heaven stage.

To Nie Tian's surprise, Wu Ji walked out of his thatched cottage, and said to him, "I've already told you everything there's to say about the transition from the Qi Refining stage into the Lesser Heaven stage. For the rest, you'll have to explore by yourself.

"This is the first bottleneck you'll encounter on your path of cultivation. You'll meet many more in the future. You can't make the breakthrough by cultivating blindly. Instead, you'll need to draw upon your own experience and comprehension.

"You've stayed here for half a year already. It's time that you went out and explored. You'll benefit from it.

"The Spiritual Treasure sect is holding a grand convention. I'll have the Thunder Beast take you there. Here, take this command medallion. Show it to them at the Spiritual Treasure sect and they'll let you take up to three items; you can choose anything you like.

"Before you reach the Lesser Heaven stage, there is no need to

learn about spiritual tools. Due to your current insufficient cultivation base and spiritual power, there is absolutely no way for you to bring out the full potential of a spiritual tool.

“You can learn how to wield them when you enter the Lesser Heaven stage.”

With these words, Wu Ji waved his hand towards the sky.

A low-pitched cry echoed out from within the clouds, and in the next moment, a giant eagle-like Thunder Beast landed in front of them.

It was dark-green in color, wreathed in numerous fine lightning bolts, and within its deep, green eyes, lightning flickered from time to time.

With a flap of its wings, the lightning that covered its entire body entered into its body like little snakes.

“Go,” said Wu Ji. “It’ll take you to the Spiritual Treasure sect.”

Nie Tian took the command medallion, which had the ‘Ji’ character carved into it, and carefully climbed onto the Thunder Beast’s back.

The Thunder Beast seemed to be somewhat unwilling and slightly twisted its body. That small movement almost shook Nie Tian off its back.

With a cold snort, Wu Ji looked towards the Thunder Beast and said, “Don’t feel wronged. You’ll need Nie Tian’s help one day!”

The Thunder Beast’s eyes glittered with light of intelligence. After hearing Wu Ji’s words, it seemed to be slightly puzzled, unable to comprehend what he meant.

“Take Nie Tian to the Spiritual Treasure sect,” Wu Ji said with a scolding tone. “You’d better not cause trouble on your way there, or I won’t let you off easily!”

The Thunder Beast let out a discontented bellow and stopped moving around, waiting for Nie Tian get a firm hold. Only then did it flap its wings and soar up into the sky.

# Chapter 92: It Felt Like Centuries Have Passed

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Somewhere in the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range...

Three sparsely vegetated mountain peaks rose up in three directions like the points of a triangle. In between them all was a huge valley, which was the home of the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Numerous stone pavilions stood tall in the valley, and streams of people walked along the wide stone paths.

On the three mountain peaks surrounding the Spiritual Treasure sect were large numbers of caves, with people from the Spiritual Treasure sect constantly going in and out of them.

Those caves belonged to the sect's equipment forgers.

When they entered the caves, they were all well-dressed, and their bearings were confident and elegant, but when they walked out from the cave, their appearance was always messy, their hair disheveled and their faces dirty.

Of those who walked out, some held spiritual tools in hand and cheered loudly, while others held their head down, disheartened, looking almost as if their parents had just passed away.

The main gate of the Spiritual Treasure sect stood high at the

north entrance of the valley, and often saw luxurious carriages passing through, carrying travelers from distant lands.

An Shiyi stood at the gate, dressed in fine red garments, her delicate and beautiful face filled with a smile. Whenever she saw someone coming, she would step forward to greet them and arrange their accommodations.

She wore a silver bracelet on her jade-like wrist, and a heart-shaped pendant could be seen hanging around her snow-white neck. Her every single movement showed off the most beautiful side of a woman, provoking deep desire in every man who saw her.

However, under her seemingly everlasting smile, there appeared to be sorrow deeply hidden in her eyes.

In the past, her status in the Spiritual Treasure sect had ensured that she would never be entrusted with a menial task like receiving guests.

However, as the representative of the Spiritual Treasure sect and person in charge of the Green Illusion dimension trial, she had failed to notice the actions of the Ghost sect and the Blood sect, which directly led to the annihilation of the entire Grayvale sect team, as well as heavy casualties to the other three sects. Because of this, her status in the Spiritual Treasure sect had greatly dropped.

In order to appease the other three sects, An Shiyi had received severe punishment, and had descended to a point where she had to

greet guests in front of the sect's main gate.

Over the years in the Spiritual Treasure sect, everything had gone her way. She had been highly regarded by the sectmaster and had never met such a huge setback before.

Thanks to the sectmaster's high regard, the old men within the sect who harbored evil intentions towards her had all hidden their intentions and not dared to act imprudently.

However, according to the rumors, due to her dereliction of duty regarding the Green Illusion dimension trial, the sectmaster seemed to have raised doubts regarding her competence, and thus had removed her status as a deacon.

Therefore, the old ones who had been drooling over her beauty immediately grew restless.

Recently, each and every one of them had sent people to test out her intentions, expressing their wish of becoming partners with her.

After rejecting them a number of times, she had discovered that her situation in the Spiritual Treasure sect had become more and more difficult.

An Shiyi thought to herself, "There must not be any accident at this convention. Otherwise... things will be even more difficult in the future."



WHOOSH! WHOOSH!

Panting sounds rang out as three Gold Horn Beasts dragged a huge carriage from the north.

On the carriage, Sang Bing from the Grayvale sect looked coldly at An Shiyi, his face grim.

Next to him sat Yuan Xian, who, at the first sight of An Shiyi, said unpleasantly, “An Shiyi, how do you still have the face to receive us? If it wasn’t for you, my Feng’er wouldn’t have died in the Green Illusion dimension! Because you failed to detect the Ghost sect’s and Blood sect’s actions, my precious Feng’er is dead!”

Yuan Xian was the sister of Yuan Fengchun, master of the Yuan clan from Frost Stone City.

Yuan Feng, who had led the Grayvale sect’s disciples into the Green Illusion dimension, had been Yuan Fengchun’s grandson. Yuan Xian, who had never married in her entire life, had always treated Yuan Feng as her own grandson.

The reason Yuan Feng had been deemed as a ‘seed’ by the Grayvale sect was not only because of his exceptional talent, but also partly because of her.

Admittedly, Yuan Fengchun was a well-known figure among the major clans of the seven cities, but compared to his sister, he

wasn't even worth mentioning.

From a young age, Yuan Xian had displayed exceptional cultivation talent, and as of now, she was already one of the five valemasters of the Grayvale sect.

Grayvale consisted of five vales, each of which had a valemaster. Although she was the master of the smallest vale, she was the fifth most respected person in the entire sect.

It was because of her that the Yuan clan dared to act domineeringly among all the subordinate clans of the Grayvale sect, and was also why the Yuan clan was deemed as the number one clan in Frost Stone City.

As for the reason why the Yun clan had gotten rid of Nie Qian and made Yun Zhiguo marry Yuan Qiuying, it was because they took a fancy to the Yuan clan's lofty status in the Grayvale sect.

After all, the Yun clan was merely an insignificant subordinate clan.

"Senior Yuan," An Shiyi smiled bitterly, "it was the Ghost sect and Blood sect that killed Yuan Feng, not me, right? If you want to take revenge, you should go to the Ghost sect and Blood sect. Why make things difficult for me?"

Yuan Xian's gaze was as cold as ice. "Of course I won't let them off! But you have to take responsibility too! If you didn't fail at

your job of discovering their plans, how would they have been able to set foot in the Green Illusion dimension? If they weren't able to enter the Green Illusion dimension, how would Feng'er have possibly died?"

With these words, Yuan Xian paused for a while and glared at An Shiyi. Face bleak, she said, "An Shiyi, if you want to rely on your pretty face to keep a foothold in the Realm of Flame Heaven, then you'd better find someone strong to rely on. I heard that... some of the elders in your sect have quite a taste for you. I'd say, obey them.

"After all, a woman like you, other than your good looks, what else do you have?

"If you marry one of them, I might have to give them face and leave you alone. But... if there is no one to protect you, then with your current status in the Spiritual Treasure sect, I have plenty of methods to use on you!"

Yuan Xian was blunt about the scandals in the Spiritual Treasure sect, despite the fact that there were people around watching.

After hearing her words, An Shiyi's face flickered. She wanted to retort, but with a second thought about her current situation, she chose to simply accept the abuse.

At that time, she noticed that around her, many Spiritual Treasure sect disciples were now looking at her with strange gazes.

She immediately realized that the troublesome matters that had been weighing her down recently, had already been made public before she knew it.

“Senior Yuan, please enter the sect.” An Shiyi bowed, indicating for Sang Bing and Yuan Xian to enter the gate.

Yuan Xian wasn't in a rush to go in, and continued to sit on her carriage, looking down upon An Shiyi.

“After all,” she said coldly, “the An clan's foundation is too shallow. Your clan doesn't even have one elder in the Spiritual Treasure sect, but rather they depend on you and your sister to maintain their foothold in Black Cloud City. Once you lose your power in the Spiritual Treasure sect, your sister and your clan may all go down with you. An Shiyi, you'd better think it through. Think about your sister and your clan.”

“Thank you for your concern, Senior Yuan,” An Shiyi replied with a frown.

She was already quite aware of what Yuan Xian was trying to say.

She knew perfectly clear that one of her pursuers was very close with Yuan Xian, and that those words that Yuan Xian had just said were very likely spoken in that person's favor.

The meaning behind her words was that, as long as she submitted to that person obediently, Yuan Xian would no longer

pursue her fault in the Green Illusion dimension trial.

Otherwise, Yuan Xian would spare no means to make life difficult for her and possibly even involve the entire An clan.

However, just thinking of that person's disgusting appearance made her feel cold and gave her goosebumps.

"You should really think about it." Yuan Xian gave her a cold look and waved to Sang Bing to get off the carriage and get inside.

At that very moment, a low-pitched cry suddenly rang out from deep within the clouds.

Upon hearing the cry, everyone at the front gate subconsciously looked up.

Before long, they saw a spirit beast gradually appear from within the thick clouds, and rapidly draw near.

WHOOSH!

A gale blew past, and when it cleared, a gigantic spirit beast had already landed in front of the crowd.

The three Gold Horn Beasts, which had previously been pulling the Grayvale sect's carriage, began to tremble and slowly crouch down.

“A Thunder Beast!”

Seeing the spirit beast descending from heaven, everyone’s faces slightly flickered.

Even Yuan Xian and Sang Bing suddenly fell into silence upon its appearance.

A curious voice echoed out from the back of the Thunder Beast. “So this is the Spiritual Treasure sect?”

Everyone looked over with rapt attention, and found that there was well-built young man sitting on the Thunder Beast’s back.

“It’s... it’s him!!” An Shiyi was flabbergasted.

“Yee? Big Sister An?!” Nie Tian looked around and immediately spotted An Shiyi. Sitting on the back of the Thunder Beast, he waved his hand towards An Shiyi. With a smile, he said, “Long time no see!”

“It’s only been half a year,” An Shiyi said, smiling.

Sang Bing, who was still sitting on the carriage, whispered to Yuan Xian, “He’s that kid from the Nie clan.”

Yuan Xian took a deep look at Nie Tian and nodded briefly, not

saying a word.

“That kid is now Eccentric Wu’s disciple,” said Sang Bing. “He’s not someone we can afford to provoke... should we tell the Yun clan to dial down their actions a bit?”

Yuan Xian remained silent for a while and then said, “Qiuying is my niece, but a girl who marries into another clan is like water that has been poured away. I would certainly not offend Eccentric Wu because of her.”

“That’s good,” said Sang Bing, sounding a bit relieved.

“Let’s get inside,” said Yuan Xian.

While Nie Tian jumped down from the Thunder Beast’s back and walked towards An Shiyi, the people from the Grayvale sect took the initiative and entered the gate one after another.

Seeing them leave, An Shiyi’s mood lightened a bit.

She understood that if it wasn’t for the arrival of Nie Tian, then with Yuan Xian’s harsh nature, she would mock her well and good in front of the Spiritual Treasure sect’s main gate and there was no way that she would have let her off that easily.

It had only been half a year since they had parted. However, a complicated expression appeared on her face as she sized up the current Nie Tian. To her, it felt like it had been ages.

“This little punk...”



# Chapter 93: Treasure Convention

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Compared to half a year ago, Nie Tian had not only grown stronger, but also become quite a bit taller.

In An Shiyi's eyes, he had been nothing more than a child half a year ago. However, the Nie Tian currently in front of her had already grown into a young man.

After the Green Illusion dimension trial, not only had Nie Tian's cultivation base improved significantly, but he had also shed away his immaturity and had become more confident and calm.

Even though An Shiyi was surprised by all the changes, what had really made her sigh with mixed emotions was Nie Tian's current status.

He's now Wu Ji's disciple.

She had long since heard about the name Wu Ji as well as his honorable status, not only in the Cloudsoaring sect, but even across the entire Realm of Flame Heaven.

Having been chosen by Wu Ji, Nie Tian could be considered to have reached the heavens with a single bound.

Because of Wu Ji, Nie Tian's future had become immeasurable.

She understood that Nie Tian's identity as Wu Ji's disciple had even made the domineering Yuan Xian avoid offending him and never again dare to cause trouble with the Nie clan.

“Sister An, how come you're greeting guests?” Nie Tian asked with a chuckle.

An Shiyi snapped out of her reverie, forced a smile, and said, “The sect has been short on hands lately. Well... enough chatting. I'll arrange for people to take you to Jiang Lingzhu and the others.”

“She's here, too?” Nie Tian asked in confusion.

“Of course,” An Shiyi responded. “The Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, and Mystic Mist sect have all come, as well as several subordinate clans of our sect.”

Nie Tian nodded. “Oh, I see.”

“Go ahead. I'll find you and chat when I get time,” said An Shiyi.

Nie Tian didn't read too much into her words. “Okay, then I'll head inside first.”

“Liu He, bring Nie Tian to the Cloudsoaring sect's residence,” An Shiyi instructed.

A person from the Spiritual Treasure sect hurried out of the sect gate and said respectfully, "Please, follow me."

WHOOSH!

At that moment, the Thunder Beast flapped its wings and took off, soaring high into the clouds.

Knowing that Jiang Lingzhu and others from the Cloudsoaring sect were also here, Nie Tian didn't worry about the departure of the Thunder Beast.

He believed that since Jiang Lingzhu was here, whether or not the Thunder Beast would return and pick him up after the convention, he would be able to return to his sect along with Jiang Lingzhu and the others.

Therefore, under the guidance of the man from the Spiritual Treasure sect, he entered the main gate.

Once he was inside, he saw numerous stone pavilions alongside the stone roads, with Qi warriors of different realms constantly going in and out of them.

A loud laugh echoed out from within a stone cave that was in the mountain peak to his left.

"I've done it! Hahaha! It has finally been refined!"

An old man with red hair and a bushy beard that still had sparks of fire shooting out of it, was waving a long sword that had rays of moonlight flowing within, as if he had gone insane.

Nie Tian looked up towards the incomparably excited old man, and asked, "Equipment forger?"

Liu He, the escort, nodded while smiling. With a brief bow, he said, "In the entire Realm of Flame Heaven, we have the most equipment forgers in our sect. They all live in the stone caves in the nearby mountains, within which there are equipment forging rooms. Those unique equipment forging rooms are connected to the blazing flames at the earth's core, enabling the equipment forgers to easily melt and forge items.

"A lot of rich buyers have come to this Treasure Convention, so all the equipment forgers are hoping to refine unique spiritual tools and then sell them for a good price.

"That's why they've been rushing with their work during the last couple of days. They all want to forge high-ranked spiritual tools."

Nie Tian nodded blankly and said, "Oh, so that's how it is."

He had heard his master Wu Ji talk about the Treasure Conventions of the Spiritual Treasure sect, so he knew something about them.

Liu He didn't lie, as most of the formidable equipment forgers of the Realm of Flame Heaven were truly from the Spiritual Treasure sect, and the Spiritual Treasure sect was located at the heart of Scarlet Flame Mountain Range, which was an excellent place for the equipment forgers to refine items.

In order for equipment forgers to refine a spiritual weapon, they would need fierce flames to melt the spiritual materials.

Deep under the Scarlet Flame Mountain Range was concealed a powerful earthflame. Through special means, the Spiritual Treasure sect channeled the earth's core flame to each and every one of the forging rooms within the caves, so as to facilitate the equipment forgers in refining and forging spiritual tools, as well as to improve their equipment forging skills.

Spiritual tools forged by the equipment forgers of the Spiritual Treasure sect would usually be shipped to the seven major cities for sale.

The equipment forgers would get spirit stones in return for selling the spiritual tools, which they would then use to buy various kinds of materials to refine spiritual tools of even higher ranks.

However, the spiritual tools that were shipped into the seven cities often wouldn't be of premium quality or high rankings.

The Spiritual Treasure sect would usually stock up the ones that were truly rare, had special usage, or high ratings. Then they

would wait to sell them during the Treasure Conventions to the Mystic Mist sect, Grayvale sect, and Cloudsoaring sect.

Only those three sects would be able to afford the truly high-ranked spiritual tools.

According to Wu Ji, not only did the tools forged by the Spiritual Treasure sect excel in the Realm of Flame Heaven, they were even reputable throughout the entire Domain of the Falling Stars.

Wu Ji said that they had even attracted Qi warriors from the other eight realms to travel across the river of stars just to attend the Treasure Conventions held by the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Moreover, the Spiritual Treasure sect would specially supply the Qi warriors from the other eight realms with a selection of spiritual tools they had forged.

Nie Tian pondered as he followed Liu He. Before long, they arrived in front of a six-story stone pavilion.

“All the guests from the Cloudsoaring sect have been arranged to live here.”

Liu He raised his voice and asked, “Is Mr. Liu here?”

“I’m here.” Liu Yan’s voice came from within the stone pavilion.

“Excuse me.” Hearing Liu Yan’s answer, Liu He bowed briefly and went back along the route they had taken to get here.

Moments after he left, Liu Yan from the Cloudsoaring sect walked out of the pavilion door.

Liu Yan examined Nie Tian with his eyes. “Are you the one who called my name?”

“Greetings, Mr. Liu!” Nie Tian greeted him in a grand manner.

Although he couldn’t remember Liu Yan’s appearance, he had heard from Nie Donghai and Nie Qian that when he was one year old, it was because of Liu Yan’s consent and sparing two additional spiritual tools that he was allowed to take part in the Lot-drawing Convention.

He also knew that back then he had angered many people with his domineering actions at the convention. Had it not been for Liu Yan taking his side, he would have surely been punished by the clan at the age of one...

Furthermore, the dragon bone that had practically changed his life had also belonged to Liu Yan.

For these reasons, he harbored gratitude towards Liu Yan ever since he had known about him. Unfortunately, because of his previously insignificant status, he didn’t have the chance to go to the Cloudsoaring sect and visit him.

Furthermore, Nie Tian spent the past half a year apprenticing to Wu Ji in the back mountain, and thus still hadn't found the chance to visit him.

To his surprise, he finally got to meet Liu Yan, who had shown major kindness to him, during his trip to the Spiritual Treasure sect.

"Greetings..." Liu Yan stared at Nie Tian, who kowtowed to him with great sincerity and respect. He was confused and couldn't recall who the teenager in front of him was.

Jiang Lingzhu blurted out from inside the room, "Uncle Liu, he's Nie Tian."

"Nie... Nie Tian?!" Liu Yan was taken aback. After a moment he recovered from his state of amazement and said, "It's you, kid! Enough with the courtesy. Quickly get up. I don't dare accept it!"

He helped Nie Tian up.

However, Nie Tian took three steps backwards, and bowed. Only after that did he raise his chin and say, "Uncle Liu, I was just one year old then we met, and therefore couldn't remember what you looked like. But I heard more than a few times about you from my aunt and grandfather. I've always been grateful for what you did, and I always wanted to visit you in the Cloudsoaring sect. Unfortunately I never had the chance to do so."



“Hahaha!” Liu Yan laughed out loud. “Your mom was my junior martial sister. It’s only right that I look after you. You don’t need to burden yourself with it.”

With these words, Liu Yan stopped laughing, but instead looked deeply at Nie Tian and said, “But I never thought her son would be even more outstanding than her. Back when your grandfather asked me to test your cultivation talent, I didn’t discover anything.

“After all, I wasn’t martial granduncle. I didn’t have his acute perception, and wasn’t able to see through your potential at that time.

“However, seeing what you have achieved today, I’m really happy for her. I hope that you can take advantage of such a rare opportunity and rise up like your two senior martial brothers, stepping out of the Realm of Flame Heaven one day.”

“Thank you, Mr. Liu!” Nie Tian said respectfully.

Liu Yan promptly shook his head. “I can’t accept it, I really can’t accept it. You’re martial granduncle’s disciple, so according to seniority, I should address you as martial uncle.”

“So let’s put seniority aside,” Nie Tian said sincerely. “If you don’t mind, how about I address you as Uncle Liu from now on?”

“Well, sure.” An elated expression appeared on Liu Yan’s face.

“Let’s get inside. We’re family now. Come on in.”

Then, he led Nie Tian into the stone pavillion.

“Let me introduce you to everyone.” Once they were inside, Liu Yan pointed at a few people from the Cloudsoaring sect and introduced every one of them to Nie Tian. “You know Jiang Lingzhu and Ye Gumo, so I won’t say more about them. This is Shi Yi, and she is Luo Xin. They are my junior martial brother and sister. My master Wu Xing brought us here, but he isn’t here at the moment. He went to catch up with his friends from the Spiritual Treasure sect.”

Nie Tian was about to greet them one by one. However, those who had just been introduced to him all had strange expressions on their faces as they greeted Nie Tian first. “Greetings, martial uncle.”

Even Jiang Lingzhu, whose face was filled with unwillingness, greeted him obediently.

“Shi Yi and Luo Xin are my junior martial brother and sister.” Liu Yan explained in a soft voice. “Shi Yi has been a member of the sect for quite some time. When your mother was still with us, he had already become my master’s disciple. Luo Xin was taken in by my master nine years ago. She never met your mother.”

Nie Tian looked at the silent Shi Yi. After a moment of heistation, he said, “Uncle Shi.”

“I dare not accept the honor,” Shi Yi hurriedly said.

“Luo...”

He was just about to greet Luo Xin, who seemed to be only about twenty years old. The graceful Luo Xin jumped in and said, “Don’t you address me that way; I’m only a few years older than you. You can just call me Sister Xin. By all means, don’t address me as your aunt!”

“Sister Xin,” Nie Tian said with a chuckle.

Luo Xin let out a sigh of relief. With a grin, she said, “You’re so lucky that martial granduncle set his mind on you, and that the sect broke the rules that had been around for decades for you. This is really something to be proud of.”

“I’m a lucky kid,” Nie Tian said self-deprecatingly.

Liu Yan showed Nie Tian to a seat and went back to their conversation about the Treasure Convention. “Where were we?”

Nie Tian could tell that they had been discussing something before he had arrived. Hence, he sat there quietly and listened.

They had a pleasant chat.

From their conversation, Nie Tian learned that Liu Yan knew

something about equipment forging, and he had great interest in the matter. Therefore he wouldn't miss even one Treasure Convention held by the Spiritual Treasure sect.

The seven spiritual tools that Liu Yan had brought to the Nie clan years ago had been collected by him from these Treasure Conventions.

The dragon bone that had changed Nie Tian's fate was one of them. This made Nie Tian secretly attach great importance to the convention, and at the same time, become very excited about it.

## Chapter 94: The Spiritfount Pill

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Everyone chatted for a while before the sky gradually darkened. Then, everyone went back to their respective rooms.

The Treasure Convention would officially start the next day. Shi Yi, Luo Xin, and Jiang Lingzhu had already gone to rest in their rooms on the higher floors of the stone pavilion.

Only Nie Tian was asked by Liu Yan to stay.

“Nie Tian, since you’re here, did martial granduncle tell you to choose some spiritual tool?”

Nie Tian took out the command medallion that had the character ‘Ji’ on it, and showed it to Liu Yan. “He told me that I can choose up to three items that I like, and just by showing off this thing they’ll let me have them.”

With a brief glance at it, Liu Yan indicated for him to put it away.

Liu Yan frowned. “Years ago, your grandfather was seriously wounded in a fight with Yun Meng and Yuan Fengchun, and his spiritual sea was destroyed. Ever since, your grandfather hasn’t been able to gather the spiritual Qi of Heaven and Earth to continue his cultivation. Not only that, but because his spiritual sea was shattered, the spirit energy that he had gathered over the years faded away as time passed.

“Therefore, not only was your grandfather unable to achieve a breakthrough, but his cultivation has been on the decline.

“To a cultivator, the destruction of the spiritual sea means the end of the cultivation path. From then on, your grandfather has been living in depression. His status in the Nie clan also gradually lowered, and he was eventually replaced by Nie Beichuan.

“Of course, now that you’ve become the disciple of martial granduncle, your grandfather’s position in the Nie clan is once again stable.

“However, it’s hard to say if the situation will last for long. Also, this is not the way to fundamentally restore your grandfather’s confidence.”

Having laid the groundwork to make his point, Liu Yan continued, “I heard that the Spiritual Treasure sect will be putting up a very valuable Spiritfount Pill for sale, which is a seventh level Medium grade medicinal pill. It can help a cultivator rebuild their spirit sea. Your grandfather’s injury can be completely healed by it.”

Nie Tian’s mind shook. “Spiritfount Pill!”

He had always desired to help his grandfather recover from his injury one day.

Nie Donghai’s health and longevity had always been his sore

point.

After hearing that there would be a pill that could cure his grandfather's injuries for sale at this Treasure Convention, he immediately grew excited.

“A seventh level Medium grade Spiritfount Pill is definitely a rare treasure,” Liu Yan said with a brief smile. “If you were still the Nie Tian from the Nie clan, or an ordinary disciple of the Cloudsoaring sect, there would be no way for you to obtain such a valuable item. However, now that you’ve become the disciple of my martial granduncle, and are in possession of his command medallion, you can go demand that Spiritfount Pill from the Spiritual Treasure sect.”

“When and where will it be sold?” Nie Tian asked hastily.

“Tomorrow, in the Pill Pavilion,” answered Liu Yan.

“Thank you for telling me this, Uncle Liu. I’ll go to the Pill Pavilion first thing in the morning to get that Spiritfount Pill!”

“Okay, I’ll go with you.”

As the two of them talked, the sky completely darkened. Many bright lights could be seen along the streets outside.

At that moment, a female voice echoed from the door. “Excuse me... is Nie Tian here?”

Liu Yan was surprised. He looked at Nie Tian curiously, and said, “Someone’s looking for you?”

Nie Tian instantly realized that voice belonged to An Shiyi’s younger cousin, An Ying.

“An Ying...”

“Yes,” Nie Tian replied, going on to explain, “she’s a friend I made in the Green Illusion dimension.”

Liu Yan nodded his head and said, “I’ll go back to my room. You can go to the third floor later on. There are a few vacant rooms there. You can find one to rest.”

With these words, he walked up the stairs, leaving the ground floor to Nie Tian and his visitor.

The door to the stone tower had been half-opened. After Liu Yan went upstairs, An Ying quietly stuck her head in through the gap.

“I’m here,” Nie Tian said.

It was also at that moment that An Ying saw him. Then, she cut the pleasantries and walked in.

When she looked around and realized that Nie Tian was the only



one there, she asked, “Where are the others?”

Nie Tian pointed to the ceiling.

He didn’t have a favorable impression of An Ying. Before they had entered the Green Illusion dimension, she had seemed to be rather resentful towards him, and when they were in the Green Illusion dimension, she had also targeted him.

It was only later, due to his decisiveness and fierceness in the fight with the Lurker Lizard, that he had gained her trust to some extent.

However, when the witch Yu Tong had wrapped him up in her scarlet blood strings, An Ying didn’t choose to stay and help him. Instead, she believed that he would be killed beyond a shadow of a doubt, and thus abandoned him.

Therefore, he only felt that he owed An Shiyi, but not An Ying.

Now, half a year later, An Ying had become even more elegant and beautiful, however, her beauty was still dwarfed by An Shiyi.

An Ying was always straightforward, but now she seemed to have a faint sadness hidden in between her furrowed eyebrows. Something seemed to be weighing her down.

She blurted, “Do you still remember that you once said that you would spare no effort to help my sister if she got into trouble...

assuming you had the strength to do so?”

“Of course I do,” Nie Tian said.

“My sister... is in trouble now.” An Ying glanced up at the ceiling, lowered her voice, and said, “My sister was the person in charge of the Green Illusion dimension trial, and also a representative of the Spiritual Treasure sect. However, because the appearance of the Blood sect and the Ghost sect, Yuan Feng from the Grayvale sect was killed. There were also heavy casualties among the other three sects, including ours. Therefore, my sister’s status as a deacon has been removed.”

“She got demoted?” Nie Tian was taken aback.

Within the Spiritual Treasure sect, the most powerful person was undoubtedly the sectmaster. Below him, there were elders. Below them were the deacons. Finally, it was the ordinary disciples.

Deacons were mostly responsible for the affairs of the Spiritual Treasure sect in the seven cities, selling spiritual tools for the Spiritual Treasure sect and collecting spiritual materials that could be used to refine various types of spiritual tools.

During the years she had been a deacon, An Shiyi straightened out many issues for the sect. Because of that, she was highly regarded by the sectmaster, and became quite reputable within the sect.

However, because of the incident that had occurred in the Green Illusion dimension, she was unexpectedly stripped of her status as a deacon, and now had no choice but to greet the guests at the sect gate.

An Ying's expression turned grimmer. "In the past, thanks to my sister's status as a deacon, coupled with the sectmaster's trust in her, those old guys in the sect didn't dare to act imprudently, although they secretly desired her.

"Now that my sister has lost everything, those old bastards who have been drooling over my sister's beauty saw the opportunity, and want to take her as their wife or concubine.

"One of them was especially disgusting. Just now, he sent his disciple to try to force my sister's hand yet again." An Ying couldn't help but gnash her teeth.

Nie Tian replied calmly, "Where is that guy?"

"Probably still at my sister's place!" An Ying's words were filled with hatred.

Nie Tian rose to his feet. "Take me there."

"Alright!" An Ying immediately found new courage.

Were it half a year ago, she wouldn't even have come to Nie Tian.

However, the current Nie Tian had the glorious position of being the disciple of Wu Ji, and Wu Ji was one of the most formidable existences within the entire Realm of Flame Heaven.

Actually, the reason why she came over this time was that she hoped to scare that person off with Nie Tian's status.

In a distant, quiet courtyard within the Spiritual Treasure sect...

An Shiyi, who had run back and forth for a whole day, had changed out of her red garments into a white silk skirt, which didn't make her look as appealing as she was during the daytime, but instead, gave her an elegant and refreshing look.

At that moment, her ripe, round buttocks were sitting on the swing in the courtyard. Her body followed the lifeless swaying of the swing and stress filled her delicate face.

Beside the ornamental rocks, Fei Li wore a grim expression as he toyed with a golden ball that had sparks of flames splashing out of it. He took his time saying, "You are probably aware of my master's status in the sect. You're merely a girl from a subordinate clan. It's your fortune that my master sees things in you. What intention do you have by avoiding my master in every possible way?"

"In the past, with the sectmaster protecting you, you could do as you wanted.

“Now that you’ve lost both his trust and your status as a deacon, do you think that you can still act the same way as before?”

“The truth is that Yuan Xian from the Grayvale sect wants to target you with all means possible. Without my master to stop her, don’t even dream of passing through the next few months smoothly!”

“You’ve also seen Yuan Xian today. She just talked to my master, and has made it perfectly clear that If you still don’t submit to him, then she will make a move.

“You’d better think carefully. Once Yuan Xian makes a move, what kind of damage will your clan, your younger sister, and yourself suffer?”

“For that Yuan Feng, she already killed many people from the Ghost sect and the Blood sect.

“Our sect holds part of the responsibility for Yuan Feng’s death. The sectmaster also agreed to that. During such a sensitive period, the sectmaster won’t make enemies with the Grayvale sect just for you. Therefore, if Yuan Xian makes a move, he might not interfere!”

“My master has spoken. He wants an answer tonight!”

With a cold face and an aggressive tone, Fei Li attempted to force

An Shiyi to make a decision immediately.

KREEEN!

The swing suddenly stopped swaying. A sorrowful and helpless expression gradually appeared in An Shiyi's blank eyes.

“Alright... For my sister and the An clan...” She was prepared to sacrifice herself.

BANG!

At that moment, An Ying shoved the door open and led Nie Tian directly to the courtyard.

“An Ying?” Fei Li snorted. Completely ignoring An Ying, he continued to threaten An Shiyi, “Your sister is still young. If you lose your power in the sect, she will have no one to back her in the future. Well, you should know that if a little girl wants to establish a foothold in the sect, she needs to either have an unparalleled talent or a someone to rely on.

“You are her backer within the sect. However, if you lose everything you have, do you think that she still can cultivate in the sect without any trouble?”

“Sister An, who is this shit-talker?” Nie Tian asked, even though he already knew the answer.

# Chapter 95: You're My Sister Now

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Fei Li's expression immediately darkened.

He didn't even bother to look at Nie Tian, but rather stared coldly towards An Shiyi. "Is he a junior clansman from your clan?"

Without waiting for An Shiyi to reply, Fei Li grinned maliciously, and nodded towards Nie Tian. "You like cursing people, right? Fine! I'll let you know what punishment a disciple from a subordinate clan will receive for insulting me!"

Sparks of flames immediately floated out of Fei Li's fingertips, within which thrummed surges of blazing spiritual energy.

He was on the property of the Spiritual Treasure sect, with the An Sisters standing right beside him. Even so, after assuming Nie Tian was a clansman from the An clan, he actually dared to make a move on him without the slightest scruple.

"You dare to lay a hand on him?" An Ying shouted out loud. "You aren't afraid that Eccentric Wu will rip you apart!"

An Shiyi had also planned to stop Fei Li, but hearing that An Ying shouted out, she stopped.

After hearing An Ying's words, Fei Li's expression abruptly changed.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

He forcefully channeled those beams of flame back into his body. He took a deep breath and asked, “You are Nie Tian?”

“I am,” Nie Tian calmly answered.

“Who is An Shiyi to you?”

“She’s my sworn sister.”

Fei Li clearly had a suspicious look in his eyes as he glanced at An Ying, and then he realized that An Ying had an arrogant expression on her face.

He immediately understood that it was An Ying who had brought Nie Tian to this place. He also understood her intentions.

“It’s dark already. It’s inconvenient for me to stay here any longer.”

With these words, he frowned and left decisively, without continuing to berate Nie Tian or demand an answer from An Shiyi.

After he had left, only Nie Tian and the An sisters were left in the courtyard.



“Thank you,” An Shiyi said softly.

“You’re my sworn sister from today on,” Nie Tian said solemnly. “And I’m serious about that.”

An Shiyi’s bright eyes lit up.

An Ying said hastily, “Elder Sister, Nie Tian is Wu Ji’s disciple. As long as you establish a relationship with him, that old bastard Gan Kang definitely won’t dare to be so impudent!”

With great sincerity, Nie Tian said, “Elder Sister An, you gave me a slot to the Green Illusion dimension trial. Whatever your intentions were, I benefited a great deal from it and for that I’ll always remember your kindness. I once said to An Ying that if you were to encounter troubles one day, then given that I was capable, I would definitely help you at all costs.

“Of course, my strength is still far from sufficient. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have allowed that Fei Li to walk out of this courtyard!

“The only thing that I can do for you now is to use my status to overshadow Gan Kang, so that he won’t dare to act imprudently.”

Before An Ying and Nie Tian arrived, An Ying had already told him that Fei Li’s Master, Gan Kang, was one of the equipment forging experts of the Spiritual Treasure sect.

The Spiritual Treasure sect was a Qi warrior sect, but wasn’t

exactly the same as the Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, or Mystic Mist sect. The sect was divided into two parts, namely the Spiritual school and the Treasure school.

The Spiritual school attached their importance to the cultivation of Qi, which therefore made it generally similar to the other three sects.

The Treasure school, on the other hand, consisted of equipment forgers who focused their energy on researching the techniques of equipment refining and forging, and viewed it as their way of cultivation.

Gan Kang was one of the highest ranked equipment forging experts in the Treasure school, and also the fifth person in the Treasure school to be able to refine Premium grade spiritual tools.

The best equipment forging master in the Treasure school was an old friend of Nie Tian's master, Wu Ji, and was also infatuated with equipment forging and practically never paid attention to sect affairs.

Therefore, Gan Kang and three other high-ranked equipment forging experts were left in charge of all of the affairs in the Treasure school.

The master of the Spiritual school was also the master of the Spiritual Treasure sect. Even though he held unparalleled power in the sect, he seldom interfered with the Treasure school's internal affairs.

Even he had to give face to the four highly ranked equipment forgers. As long as they didn't do anything over the line, the sectmaster would usually not interfere with what they did or just turn a blind eye to it.

The reason that the Spiritual Treasure sect ranked higher than the Cloudsoaring sect, Grayvale sect, and Mystic Mist sect, was that other than the Spiritual school, they also had the Treasure school.

Most of the spiritual tools that the Qi warriors of the four sects used were refined and forged by the Treasure school, and thus the Treasure school enjoyed a very special position amongst the four sects.

Generally speaking, the Spiritual school, as well as the other three sects, weren't willing to offend equipment forgers from the Treasure school.

The reason Nie Tian was aware of Gan Kang's status, yet still had the audacity to pressure Gan Kang with his own status was, because he knew that his Master, Wu Ji, was sworn friends with the Treasure school's strongest equipment forging master, Fang Hui.

Considering Gan Kang's status, if it was anyone else from the Cloudsoaring sect, they probably wouldn't be too willing to make enemies with Gan Kang.

However, Nie Tian wasn't afraid.

“Elder Sister, you need Nie Tian as your nominal younger brother!” An Ying said in a low voice.

An Shiyi seemed somewhat hesitant. “It's very kind of Nie Tian, but I'm afraid that I'll bring him troubles.”

Nie Tian chuckled and said, “I don't care whether you accept me or not. From now on, I'll tell everyone I see that you're my sworn sister!”

An Shiyi's glistening, charming eyes hesitated for a moment before she burst into laughter. Her beauty was like that of hundreds of beautiful blooming flowers. “If you want an elder sister so badly, I'll be your elder sister.”

“Elder Sister,” Nie Tian called, smiling.

An Shiyi had a joyous expression on her face as she laughed, while nodding her head. “It seems that the smartest decision I've made this year was to go to your Nie clan and invite you to the Green Illusion dimension, although my heart was full of evil intentions.”

“Hahaha, whatever your intentions were, I'm grateful to you.” Nie Tian laughed.

“Thank you.” An Shiyi's words sounded solemn. Shortly after,

she pursed her lips into a smile, and with a wave of her hand, indicated for An Ying to take Nie Tian and leave. “It’s late. You’ll still have to choose spiritual tools together with people from your sect. You cannot stay here too long, or else people will gossip.”

“Haha, I’m not afraid,” Nie Tian said.

An Shiyi rolled her eyes at him. “You might not be afraid, but I am. You’re no longer a child. With the messy stuff going on between those old things and me, my reputation isn’t exactly good. If you spend the night here, I’m not too sure what they’ll say about me.”

“I believe that you value your reputation very much and won’t do anything to jeopardize it,” Nie Tian said sincerely.

An Ying grew impatient and pulled Nie Tian away. “Alright, alright. Let’s go!”

An Ying glared at him and warned, “Nie Tian, my sister only needs you as her nominal younger brother for your status. Don’t you have any other thoughts! In the future, when my elder sister gets out of all the trouble and once again wins over the sectmaster’s trust, I’ll need you to remove your relationship as nominal brother and sister!”

“Oh? You’d better talk to your sister about it then.” Nie Tian smirked, and continued, “What? Are you worried that your elder sister may fall in love with me?”

“Bullshit!” An Ying was annoyed. “You still smells of your mother’s milk! How can my elder sister like a witless child like you? I’m worried that you’re like those old bastards, harboring vile thoughts towards my sister!”

Smiling, Nie Tian teased her, “Hey, I’m still a child. Isn’t it a bit inappropriate for you to say those kind of things to me?”

“Save it! I’ve known for a long time that you weren’t honest when we were in the Green Illusion dimension!” An Ying retorted. She suddenly seemed to have thought of something and lowered her voice, asking sneakily, “By the way, what did you do to Yu Tong to make her so mad at you? I heard that she spent three whole months to heal herself after returning to the Blood sect.

“After her strength was restored, she sent people from the Blood sect to ask around for your whereabouts.

“She spread the word that she bears ocean-deep hatred towards you, and as long as she sees you, one of you will have to die.

“That witch has never hated a person so much before. What exactly did you do to her to make her so angry that she wants you dead so eagerly?”

Nie Tian paused for a moment and touched his head, saying, “Nothing... Who knows what made that woman go crazy.”

“You must have done something to her!” An Ying’s words were

full of certainty.

“No, I didn’t!”

“You did!”

“I really didn’t!”

“You definitely did!”

The two argued while walking. A while later, they returned to the stone pavilion that had been allotted to the Cloudsoaring sect. An Ying stopped bickering, and said, “Even though you’re a little bit annoying, you can be considered a man of your word. Thank you for what you did for my sister this time.”

With these words, she didn’t wait for Nie Tian to reply and walked off, looking slightly embarrassed.

...

The following day, in the Pill Pavilion of the Spiritual Treasure sect.

First thing in the morning, Liu Yan led Nie Tian to the Pill Pavilion.

The Pill Pavilion wasn't big at all. It only had three stories, with a limited collection of medicine pills stored within it.

That was because the majority of the members of the Treasure school were equipment forgers; there was only one person who knew how to refine pills.

Moreover, it was said that most of the medicine pills in the Pill Pavilion actually weren't refined by that alchemist, but rather acquired by the Spiritual Treasure sect through exchanging spiritual tools with the other eight realms.

Medicine pills only played a insignificant role in the Treasure Convention, and there weren't many medicine pills to be sold in the Pill Pavilion.

Therefore, as long as one had sufficient spirit stones to spend, they would be able to purchase them directly, and wouldn't need to take part in auctions.

The reason why Nie Tian arrived early in the morning was precisely that he wanted to obtain the Spiritfount Pill at the first possible moment, in case others might beat him to it.

While he was waiting for the door to open, Nie Tian was surprised to see that Zheng Bin, Han Xin, and Dowager Weng from the Mystic Mist sect had also come.

“Mr. Liu, why have you suddenly become interested in medicine



pills?” Dowager Weng asked. “From what I remember, don’t you only buy spiritual tools every time you come to the convention?”

She knew that even though Liu Yan almost never hosted the Lot-drawing Conventions that had been held every few years by the Cloudsoaring sect’s subordinate clans, practically all of the spiritual tools that had been presented at the Lot-drawing Conventions had been selected by Liu Yan from the Spiritual Treasure sect.

One of Liu Yan’s major duties was to pick low grade spiritual tools and bestow them upon the subordinate clans.

“My little martial uncle has set his mind on the Spiritfount Pill,” said Liu Yan. “If you are also here to purchase medicinal pills, I hope that you aren’t aiming for it.”

“Little martial uncle...”

Dowager Weng, Zheng Bin, and Han Xin all looked over at Nie Tian with strange expressions in their eyes.

“Long time no see, Zheng Bin,” Nie Tian greeted.

“Congratulations,” Zheng Bin replied.

After a glance at Nie Tian, Dowager Weng turned to Liu Yan and said, “You can rest assured. Eccentric Wu’s disciple wants the Spiritfount Pill. Even if I wanted it, I wouldn’t dare to fight over

it.”

With a smile, Liu Yan said, “Well, many thanks then.”

# Chapter 96: Enemies Are Always Hard to Avoid

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The time had come and the Pill Pavilion opened.

Nie Tian and Liu Yan were the first to enter the door. The first thing they saw were three Spiritual Treasure sect disciples standing and waiting inside respectfully.

The moment Liu Yan and Dowager Weng entered, the three disciples recognized them, and immediately smiled and greeted them.

“Greetings, Mr. Liu! Greetings, Senior Weng!”

Liu Yan nodded and asked, “Which floor is the Spiritfount Pill on?”

“The third floor,” one of them answered.

Liu Yan didn’t say another word and took Nie Tian up the stairs.

There were five counters set up on the third floor, inside every one of which could be seen a few pills stored in delicate cases.

As soon as Nie Tian arrived on the third floor, and before he could even glance around, a deep voice rang out. “It’s you?!”

“Fei Li...” Nie Tian’s face went grim.

He never expected that Fei Li, who he had met in An Shiyi’s courtyard last night, was overseeing the third floor of the Pill Pavilion.

Fei Li and another female disciple of the Spiritual Treasure sect were the only ones serving as salesclerks on the third floor.

Liu Yan cut the pleasantries, stepped forward and said, “Fei Li, take out the Spiritfount Pill. My little senior martial uncle wants to buy it.”

After returning last night, Nie Tian hadn’t spoken to Liu Yan, but rather simply found a room and rested.

Hence, Liu Yan had no idea that Nie Tian and Fei Li had already started a feud last night.

“The Spiritfount Pill is no longer for sale,” Fei Li said coldly.

“What?” Zhang Qin, the female equipment forger on the third floor, looked at Fei Li.

Confused, she said, “Senior Martial Brother Fei, didn’t your master leave that Spiritfount Pill here for sale?”

“Correct, but we’re not selling it now.” Fei Li snorted.

Zhang Qin looked at Fei Li and then towards Liu Yan. She seemed to have sensed something was going on. Thus, she didn’t say another word.

“Fei Li, what are you doing?” Liu Yan said, sounding irritated.

“Not selling means not selling!” Fei Li’s tone wasn’t pleasant at all.

Nie Tian’s expression also turned very grim.

That Spiritfount Pill could help his grandfather rebuild his spiritual sea and also help solve the problem that had been plaguing his grandfather for many years.

The moment he learned about the Spiritfount Pill, he had decided to get it at all cost.

However, he never expected that the Spiritfount Pill... was Gan Kang’s. As the owner, Gan Kang indeed had the right to stop selling it.

If the owner didn’t wish to sell, Nie Tian could do nothing about it, not even with Wu Ji’s command medallion.

“Fei Li, do you have a problem with me?” Liu Yan furrowed his

brows.

Fei Li didn't say anything. Instead, he looked over towards Nie Tian.

Liu Yan was puzzled. He turned around and asked Nie Tian, "When did you have a conflict with him?"

"Last night," Nie Tian answered.

Liu Yan thought for a moment and understood what was going on. "Because of that An Ying girl?"

He was a well-informed man. Before coming to the Spiritual Treasure sect, he had heard that Fei Li's master, Gan Kang, had set his mind on An Shiyi.

An Ying's anxious expression when she hurried over last night, coupled with Fei Li's abnormal behaviors today, had already made the truth obvious to him.

Nie Tian went ahead and explained, "An Shiyi is my sworn sister."

Upon hearing Nie Tian's words, Zhang Qin suddenly realized what was going on.

Liu Yan smiled bitterly as he searched laboriously in his head for

a solution.

If not for last night's incident, he believed that Nie Tian could have easily obtained the Spiritfount Pill with Wu Ji's command medallion.

However, now...

The pill belonged to Gan Kang. They clearly couldn't force him to sell it.

When Liu Yan was reaching the end of his wits, Fei Li took out the case containing the Spiritfount Pill from the counter. He gently stroked the delicately engraved cover of the case as he slowly said, "My master acquired it from a cultivator from one of the other eight realms at the cost of a sixth level Medium grade spiritual tool.

"The Spiritfount Pill can't be considered as a rare item in other realms. However, it's rather hard to get in the Realm of Flame Heaven.

"Actually, this pill isn't necessarily unsellable... You just need to stop meddling with others' business."

With these words, he looked coldly at Nie Tian, as if he was waiting for Nie Tian to cave and promise to stay out of it.

"Let's go," said Nie Tian.

Liu Yan sighed and told Fei Li, “I know who your master is. However, you’d better think it through; is it worth it to offend my martial granduncle over a trifling Spiritfount Pill?”

“The pill is ours,” Fei Li said indifferently, “We don’t want to sell it. Is he going to come to the Spiritual Treasure sect and take it by force?”

“Fine.” Liu Yan nodded. No longer in the mood to try to persuade him, he went downstairs with Nie Tian.

Dowager Weng caught sight of them when they came down, and asked, “Yee? Are you leaving now? Did you get that Spiritfount Pill?”

Liu Yan smiled bitterly. “No, they’re not willing to sell it.”

Dowager Weng was taken aback. “That’s impossible! Who’s the seller? I can’t believe someone refused to give face to Eccentric Wu!”

Liu Yan shrugged. He didn’t explain and walked out of the Pill Pavilion with Nie Tian.

Standing outside of the Pill Pavilion, Liu Yan thought for a moment and then said, “Don’t worry. I’ll see if I can ask for some friends to buy it for you.”



“Thank you, Uncle Liu.” Then, Nie Tian explained everything that had happened the day before. “I benefited a great deal because of An Shiyi. If not for the chance that she gave me to enter the Green Illusion dimension, I wouldn’t be who I am today.”

“Hmm, there’s nothing wrong with repaying kindness.” Liu Yan nodded. “Although Spiritfount Pills are hard to find in the Realm of Flame Heaven, they aren’t that rare in the other realms. Even if we can’t get one this time, there’ll be chances in the future. After all, you’re the disciple of martial granduncle.

“Let’s drop it for now and go take a look around in other places.”

Nie Tian replied, “I guess I have to.”

Shortly after, he temporarily suppressed the urge to purchase the Spiritfount Pill and followed Liu Yan as he roamed through the many Spiritual Tool Pavilions in the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Liu Yan knew that Nie Tian had only reached the Qi Refining stage, therefore didn’t bring him to places that sold high grade spiritual tools. Instead, he brought him to sections where they exclusively sold low grade spiritual tools.

After covering several pavilions, Liu Yan noticed that Nie Tian hadn’t bought anything, and thought he was probably dazzled by the abundant items. Finally, he couldn’t help but ask, “Nie Tian, do you have something in your mind that you want to buy? Also, years ago I failed to detect your cultivation attribute. Your master should have been able to. Did he say anything?”

Nie Tian rubbed his head and said, “No, master has never brought up the issue of my cultivation attribute. He only told me to choose three playthings, anything I want. He didn’t give me any specific requirement.”

His words gave Liu Yan a headache. “Without a category, or requirements... how am I supposed to help you chose?”

Liu Yan had already showed Nie Tian around three pavilions that only sold low grade spiritual tools. Some of the shops sold armor, some sold sabers and swords, and some others sold all kinds of bizarre items for personal adornment.

Nie Tian showed intense interest towards every single one of the items. However, he didn’t buy any of them.

Liu Yan originally thought that Nie Tian hadn’t come across an item that he wanted. However, after hearing what Nie Tian said, he realized that Nie Tian actually didn’t have any clue about how to make his choice.

“Uncle Liu,” Nie Tian said, “you can go shop for yourself. I’ll look around by myself. If I see anything I like, I’ll just buy it.”

Liu Yan nodded. “Okay, then.”

Actually he had his business at this convention. Not only did he have to choose spiritual tools for the subordinate clans, he also had

to choose suitable spiritual tools for Jiang Lingzhu, Ye Gumo, and other juniors.

“With your status, I doubt that you’ll run into much trouble here. In case you get into conflict with someone, just show martial granduncle’s command medallion, and there shouldn’t be any problems.” After giving Nie Tian some advice, Liu Yan temporarily parted with him to take care of his own business.

After he left, Nie Tian quietly took out the dragon bone. He muttered to himself while stroking the bone, “If I want anything, I want something like this.”

Ever since he had found out that his dragon bone had also come from one of the Treasure Conventions, he hoped to obtain an item like it at this Treasure Convention, because only items like it would be able to bring him unworldly opportunities that could cause heaven-shaking and earth-toppling changes to his life.

FIZZ! FIZZ!

Just as he was thinking to himself and stroking the animal bone, tiny sparks of flames floated inside of the dragon bone.

His expression flickered. He gathered his awareness and examined it. He discovered that the drop of blood within the dragon bone seemed to be gently squirming!

# Chapter 97: Flame Dragon Armor

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In a stone pavilion within the Spiritual Treasure sect that sold medium and premium quality armors...

There were many precious suits of armor exhibited within the glass counters, every one of which had a jade tablet in front of them, giving a brief description of the armor's grade, its special uses, its agreeable users, and its price.

Inside the pavilion, a few equipment forgers from the Treasure school were introducing several suits of armor to the people who had expressed interest in them.

In one of the counters was a dark brown suit of armor that seemed somewhat dilapidated. There weren't any complicated or delicate designs on it either.

Originally, a equipment forger from the Treasure school had been standing behind the counter. However, since no one had shown any interest in it, he had moved on to other counters to peddle other armors.

A tall Qi warrior in linen garments was standing not far from the counter, all by himself.

Ever since he had come in, he had been leaning against a stone pillar. He would look towards the armor every now and then, but he never walked around, or talked to anyone else.

In front of a counter, Luo Xin from the Cloudsoaring sect and her senior martial brother Shi Yi had their eyes set on a set of armor. It was at that moment that they noticed that tall Qi warrior and couldn't help but ask the equipment forger behind the counter.

“Who's that? I've never seen him before. It doesn't seem like he has bought anything, has he?”

The equipment forger took a glance at that person, lowered his voice and said, “Oh, are you talking about Mr. Lai Yi? Have you noticed? He put that armor there for sale, but he's constantly checking it. He doesn't seem to be from our realm. He knows elder Gan Kang. Therefore, he's here to sell that armor of his.”

Luo Xin was surprised. “He's not a Qi warrior from the Realm of Flame Heaven?”

With a brief shake of his head, the equipment forger said disdainfully, “That ‘Flame Dragon Armor’ of his is only valued to be a third level Medium grade spiritual equipment. However, he's selling it for nine thousand spirit stones. You guys know that nine thousand spirit stones are even enough to buy a sixth or seventh level Medium grade spiritual equipment. As soon as they saw the price, no one bothered to ask about it.

“Furthermore, appraisal masters from our sect appraised it. They all said that, although it's fairly tough, it's way too heavy.

“If Qi warriors of the three Heaven stages were to wear it, they'll

even find it hard to move about. Besides, its toughness seems to be its only merit. Plus, since the armor wasn't refined and forged by our sect, no one has much of an interest to sell it. So..."

"So that's how it is," Luo Xin said gently.

After hearing that person's explanation, he only thought that the foreigner Lai Yi was somewhat strange, but wasn't interested in the Flame Dragon Armor at all.

Meanwhile, Lai Yi was still standing in a remote corner checking on his Flame Dragon Armor from time to time.

WHOOSH!

At this moment, a mysterious red light suddenly emanated from within the Flame Dragon Armor.

After that, the Flame Dragon Armor, which no one had shown any interest in, seemed to suddenly emanate an intense, bloody smell.

However, it only lasted for a moment before the light was gone and the Flame Dragon Armor returned to normal again.

The bloody smell it had released had been sealed inside of the counter, and thus no one noticed it.

A light of excitement flashed across Lai Yi's ash-gray pupils. He took a deep breath, seemingly to calm himself, as he looked around.

At the same time...

In a distant part of the Spiritual Treasure sect, Nie Tian was using his psychic awareness to probe the drop of blood within the dragon bone in his hand. His eyes suddenly flickered.

When strands of his psychic awareness entered the drop of blood, he surprisingly saw a dark-brown suit of armor that appeared somewhat dilapidated.

What's more, he could just barely sense that the armor... was currently in the Spiritual Treasure sect!

"Armor that resonates with the dragon bone! It must not be ordinary!"

Excitement instantly filled Nie Tian's heart. He withdrew his psychic awareness from the drop of blood, and then carefully put the dragon bone away.

He immediately strode towards the area that was selling Medium and Premium grade spiritual tools.

Previously, after leaving the Pill Pavilion, he had followed Liu Yan to stroll around many stone pavilions that sold low ranked

spiritual tools, where he didn't see any such mysterious and slightly dilapidated armor.

Hence, he believed that, if that armor was truly in the Spiritual Treasure sect, it must be in the area that sold medium and premium spiritual equipment.

After that, he took his time sweeping through the stone pavilions that sold medium and premium spiritual equipment, glancing at the numerous fancy armors.

Before long, Nie Tian arrived at the stone pavilion that Luo Xin and Shi Yi were at. He once again scanned through the armor within the counters.

“That’s the one!”

Soon, he spotted the armor that had appeared in the drop of blood in the dragon bone, which was displayed in the unattended counter in front of him.

He directly walked towards it.

The moment Luo Xin saw him, she put down the armor in her hands and walked towards him. “Nie Tian! Why are you here? Didn’t you go with senior martial brother Liu Yan to buy that Spiritfount Pill?”

Many equipment forgers as well as some people from the



Grayvale sect and Mystic Mist sect cast their curious glances over after hearing that name.

“Nie Tian...”

They all knew what kind of existence Wu Ji was in the entire Realm of Flame Heaven.

The Cloudsoaring sect didn't hesitate in even the slightest before breaking the rule that had been around for decades to admit Nie Tian, a child from a subordinate clan, into the sect in advance. Furthermore, the moment he joined the sect, Wu Ji had taken him in as a disciple.

Nie Tian's legend had long since been spread around the four sects. All those who had known of Wu Ji were now familiar with Nie Tian's name.

Every one of them was dying to see how special this Nie Tian guy was.

“Elder sister Xin, you guys are here too.”

After greeting Luo Xin briefly, Nie Tian approached the counter that exhibited the Flame Dragon Armor. He waved his hand to call over a nearby equipment forger and said, “I want this armor.”

The eyes of the foreign Qi warrior, Lai Yi, who had been standing in the corner, suddenly lit up as he fixed his gaze on Nie Tian.

“You want this piece of armor?” Luo Xin walked up to him and with a frown, and she advised, “This armor is too overpriced; it’s not worth that much. Nie Tian, don’t be so sloppy with your choice. You don’t know much about spiritual tools. I think you should let senior martial brother Liu Yan take you around so that you won’t be ripped off.”

The other shoppers all looked over towards Nie Tian and the Flame Dragon Armor within the counter, their eyes filled with surprise.

These people had also noticed the Flame Dragon Armor not long after they had entered. However, when they saw the grade and price of the Flame Dragon Armor on the jade tablet, they all immediately lost interest in it.

Similar to Luo Xin, they also deemed that with nine thousand spirit stones, they could choose spiritual tools with a much higher grade.

Nie Tian smiled and didn’t take Luo Xin’s advice. “Elder sister Xin, I like it; this is exactly what I want.”

He turned to the equipment forger and said, “I want it.”

The equipment forger was named Zu Qing, who was a disciple of the strongest equipment forging master of the Treasure school, Fang Hui.

Not only was Zu Qing the person responsible for this floor, he also knew that his master Fang Hui and Wu Ji were old friends. Moreover, Wu Ji had granted him favors in the past. Therefore, ever since Luo Xin had called out Nie Tian's name, he had been paying special attention to him.

“This piece of item... may not fit you.” Zu Qing shot a glance towards Lai Yi, who was standing in the corner. He didn't intend to help Lai Yi peddle the item. Instead, he said, “Nie Tian, my master and your master are sworn friends. If it was someone else, I absolutely wouldn't have said anything. However, since it's you... I'll tell you something.

“This armor doesn't belong to the Treasure school. Someone else put it here for sale. First of all, it isn't worth nine thousand spirit stones. Secondly, it's extremely heavy. Even Qi warriors at Lesser Heaven, Heaven, and Greater Heaven stages will find it laborious to move about in it.

“You haven't even stepped into the Lesser Heaven stage. Once you put it on, you might not even be able to move at all.

“Also, other than its exceptional toughness, it has no other merits.

“Take my advice, Nie Tian. Go check out some other armor.”

Zu Qing was very sincere as he advised Nie Tian, hoping for him to not fall into the trap of purchasing that overpriced Flame

Dragon Armor.

Nie Tian briefly bowed towards him. “So I should call you senior martial brother Zu.” He then rubbed his head and said with an embarrassed expression on his face, “But I like do it a lot, senior martial brother. Can you just satisfy my child’s temper and sell it to me?”

With these words, he handed his master’s command medallion over to Zu Qing.

Face filled with helplessness, Zu Qing nodded and said, “I hope you won’t regret it.”

“Thank you, senior martial brother,” Nie Tian hurriedly said.

Zu Qing grabbed the command medallion and placed it onto a piece of green rock under the counter for three seconds, before returning it back to Nie Tian. After that, he took the Flame Dragon Armor out for Nie Tian. “Here you go, see if you can carry it.”

Nie Tian extended his hand and grabbed the dark-brown Flame Dragon Armor. He gave it a vigorous pull, only to discover that it didn’t move a bit.

“What?!”

With a gentle exclaim, he planned to summon all his strength to lift it. However, he noticed that everyone was looking at him,

therefore he gave up and said, “Senior martial brother Zu, would you please send this armor to my residence later?”

“Child...” Zu Qing shook his head, as he felt that Nie Tian had wasted a large amount of his master’s spirit stones on some armor that he couldn’t even lift. “Okay, you go ahead. I’ll arrange for someone to send it over later.”

“Many thanks, senior martial brother.”

# Chapter 98: Resentment at Heart

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That night...

Liu Yan, Jiang Lingzhu, Ye Gumo, and the others had all returned to the temporary residence of the Cloudsoaring sect.

Not long after, Nie Tian also returned after he finished shopping.

The moment Nie Tian returned, he saw Jiang Lingzhu and Ye Gumo happily playing with their newly-bought spiritual tools, looking rather pleased.

Ye Gumo brandished a long sword that had a silver-white aura wreathing it, giving it a rather extraordinary look. “Nie Tian, how did it go? Did you get anything? We heard about what happened with the Spiritfount Pill. Even though they’re hard to find in the Realm of Flame Heaven, considering your status, I’m sure you’ll be able to get one. It’s just a matter of time.”

Jiang Lingzhu also consoled him, “Don’t worry. With your help, your grandfather’s injuries will definitely be healed someday.”

“Thanks for the kind words,” said Nie Tian.

Liu Yan was very frank, “I’m afraid we won’t be able to get the Spiritfount Pill this time... I’ve asked a few friends to help me buy it from Fei Li, but Fei Li seems to have guessed their intentions, and insisted on not selling it.”

“Thank you, Uncle Liu,” Nie Tian said. “I appreciate the effort.”

As they were talking, Luo Xin and Shi Yi also returned. Shi Yi was holding a heavy cloth pouch in his left hand.

As soon as he walked in, he lifted the cover of the bag, revealing the Flame Dragon Armor inside of it. “Nie Tian, I’ve brought this armor back for you.”

Shi Yi furrowed his brow and said, “My cultivation base is at the late-stage of the Heaven stage. But, even I would have difficulty walking around in it.”

“Many thanks, Uncle Shi,” Nie Tian immediately said.

Luo Xin stared at Nie Tian and said, “You just won’t listen. This armor clearly doesn’t suit you, and it obviously isn’t worth nine thousand spirit stones. Why did you insist on buying it?”

Nie Tian put on a wry smile, but didn’t explain.

“What?! He spent nine thousand spirit stones on some armor?” Jiang Lingzhu was speechless.

“Yeah...” Then, Luo Xin gave a brief description of what had happened earlier.

After hearing the whole story, everyone looked at Nie Tian with an expression that seemed as if were calling him a spendthrift. They all felt that he was too young and inexperienced, and acted too rashly.

Just as they were criticizing him, the master of Liu Yan, Shi Yi, and Luo Xin, the man named Wu Xing, returned. As soon as he entered the room, the racket ceased as everyone lowered their voices.

Liu Yan, Shi Yi, and Luo Xin greeted him simultaneously. "Master."

Jiang Lingzhu and Ye Gumo also bowed.

Nie Tian had never met Wu Xing. He hesitated for a bit and chose not to take the initiative to greet him, but rather stood there quietly.

Via Nie Donghai, Nie Qian, and the others, he had long since learned that Wu Xing had been his mother's master, and that Wu Xing had placed high hopes on his mother.

It was said that his mother had been Wu Xing's favorite disciple.

However, after hearing about his mother's mysterious death, the furious Wu Xing had blamed Nie Donghai for it and had since disliked the Nie clan.



Afterwards, when Nie Qian had received unjust treatment from the Yun clan and Nie Donghai had been wounded by Yun Meng and Yuan Fengchun, Wu Xing had stayed out of it.

His silence had fueled the Yun clan's defiance, and at the same time, made many people from the Cloudsoaring sect feel that his rage towards the Nie clan might never subside.

It was also because of this that Nie Beichuan had dared to take the opportunity to kick up a storm over Nie Donghai's injuries, and slowly ate away Nie Donghai's power, before finally replacing him.

Nie Tian's feelings towards Wu Xing were extremely complicated...

On one hand, he was grateful towards Wu Xing for favoring his mother when she was alive, together with everything else that he had done for her. On the other hand, he secretly hated him for his indifference towards the entire Nie clan after his mother's death.

Wu Xing was wearing green robes, his face serious. After entering the room, he immediately caught sight of Nie Tian, whereupon he began to look him over.

Nie Tian lifted his head and finally their gazes met.

Resentment could clearly be seen within Nie Tian's eyes, as if he wasn't even trying to cover it up...

“Gan Kang talked to me today.” Wu Xing stood in silence for a while and continued, “He told me that if you stay out of the issue between him and that girl from the An clan, he’ll have Fei Li give you the Spiritfount Pill. For free.”

Anger appeared in Nie Tian’s eyes. “An Shiyi is my sworn sister!”

The moment they exchanged words, the atmosphere in the room immediately turned serious. Jiang Lingzhu and Ye Gumo exchanged a glance and quietly went upstairs, not wishing to stay for another minute.

As far as seniority in the clan is concerned, Nie Tian, who was Wu Ji’s disciple, should be considered as Wu Xing’s junior martial brother.

However, Nie Tian’s mother used to be Wu Xing’s most valued disciple.

Wu Xing had spared no effort to guide her, and unhesitatingly granted her almost all of his most precious medicinal pills and spiritual tools.

Back then, Nie Jin was Wu Xing’s weak spot, like the proverbial inverted scale that every dragon has. Everyone also knew what he had done for her

After Nie Jin’s death, Wu Xing had supposedly suffered a heavy blow and had spent a long time in secluded training, avoiding all

visitors.

Because his connection to Nie Jin had been so deep, he blamed the Nie clan for her death, and had thus treated them indifferently afterward.

As a result of his indifference, Nie Qian had been repudiated by Yun Zhiguo, and Nie Donghai had been seriously injured.

However, now the son of his most loved disciple had a new lease on life and was unexpectedly chosen by Wu Ji, making Nie Tian his junior martial brother. This was something that Wu Xing had never expected.

“Senior martial brother...” Luo Xin said timidly, hinting for Liu Yan to advise Nie Tian to control his temper.

Liu Yan smiled bitterly and waved his hand, signaling for Luo Xin and Shi Yi to go upstairs.

Luo Xin and Shi Yi, who had felt uncomfortable, seemed to have received a pardon and immediately went upstairs, just like Jiang Lingzhu and Ye Gumo had previously done.

After they left, Liu Yan coughed and said, “Master, umm... when An Shiyi was in Black Cloud City, she gave Nie Tian a spot to enter the Green Illusion dimension trial, which turned out to be a life-changing journey for Nie Tian. If it weren’t for his enormous growth during the trial, martial granduncle might not have set his

eyes on him, so..." He tried to ease the tension.

Wu Xing glanced at him and said indifferently, "I'm only delivering Gan Kang's message. I'm not going to force him to do anything. He's my junior martial brother now, so I wouldn't dare to make decisions for him."

Liu Yan secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Wu Xing spotted the Flame Dragon Armor that was partly shown. He frowned slightly and asked, "What's that?"

Liu Yan hurriedly explained everything to him.

"Nine thousand spirit stones on a third level Medium grade armor? Nonsense!" With these words, Wu Xing walked upstairs, long-faced, as if he despised Nie Tian for his rashness and at the same time wished if he could be more mature.

Nie Tian muttered, "You're not my master. I don't need you to teach me."

With a sigh, Liu Yan said, "People always go hardest on those whom they care about. You don't know how dearly my master liked your mother. After she died, it took him a very long time to recover. The feelings that he harbored towards her... were deeper than anyone else's.

"Truth be told, I think he treated her like his own daughter.

“Perhaps he was partly responsible for the things that happened in the Nie clan after that, but it was all because he couldn’t let go of her. You shouldn’t blame him too much.

“Your grandfather’s injuries can still be cured. As for your aunt Nie Qian, if that Yun Zhiguo truly loved her, he wouldn’t have done something like that to her.” He tried his best to console Nie Tian.

However, Nie Tian never said a word.

Meanwhile...

There was a certain manor in the Spiritual Treasure sect that was used to receive foreign guests, where Lai Yi had created a soundproof shield, inside of which he was having a secret conversation with two other foreign Qi warriors.

In distinct contrast to his silence during the daytime, Lai Yi had an expression of ecstasy while he spoke. “The Blood Core from the Flame Dragon Armor has surfaced! We’ve searched for it for so long, and could only find out that the Blood Core had been sold over and over again before finally ending up in the Realm of Flame Heaven. I thought that I would only be able to bring a few high ranked pieces of spiritual equipment back during this trip to the Realm of Flame Heaven. I never thought that the Blood Core would show itself so quickly!

“Actually, I didn’t hold my hopes too high. Who would’ve

thought a youngster would buy the armor on the first day!”

Excitement filled Lai Yi’s face.

The other two foreign Qi warriors also appeared quite excited after hearing about the appearance of the so-called Blood Core.

The three of them were rubbing their hands together, as if the news of the Blood Core was like a shot of adrenaline.

“If we can get the Blood Core, it’ll definitely be considered a tremendous contribution on our part!”

“Only when the Blood Core is reattached can the Flame Dragon Armor be considered complete again, and only then will it truly display its might!”

“Master will definitely reward us handsomely!”

Lai Yi gradually calmed himself and said, “Compared to the Blood Core, our mission on this trip is nothing and can be ignored. I’ve asked around. That kid’s identity isn’t ordinary. If we want to keep living in the Realm of Flame Heaven, there would be a problem if we made a move on him. Well, it’s not like we can’t leave. No matter what method we have to use, as long as we can seize the Blood Core and the Flame Dragon Armor and return to our master, we won’t have anything to worry about.”

“So when do we make a move?” one of them asked.

Beastly ferociousness could be seen in Lai Yi's eyes. "If an opportunity shows itself, we'll strike in the following days. We take the Blood Core and the Flame Dragon Armor and leave! Either that or we wait until the Treasure Convention ends and strike them on their way back to their sect!"

"Alright!"

# Chapter 99: Nourishment from Flesh and Blood

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Nie Tian grew bored of Liu Yan's lecturing, and thus tried to change the subject. "Uncle Liu, how much did you spend on the animal bone that you brought to the Lot-drawing Convention when I was one year old?"

Surprised by his question, Liu Yan didn't even think before answering, "Ah, that animal bone, I think it cost me several dozens of spirit stones. Why do you ask?"

He had never once attached any importance to the animal bone, and had only taken it out to ensure that enough items were presented.

"Several dozens of spirit stones..." Nie Tian glanced at the Flame Dragon Armor sticking out of the cloth bag and asked, "Was that animal bone refined by an equipment forger of the Treasure school?"

Liu Yan shook his head. "Nope."

It had been too long, but after a moment of pondering, he continued, "As I recall it, that animal bone seemed to share similar origins with the Flame Dragon Armor you bought today.

"When I bought it, the equipment forger of the Treasure school who sold it to me told me that a severely injured foreign Qi warrior



showed up in our realm with men trying to hunt him down.

“He seemed to be in a desperate situation and in urgent need of spirit stones, so he sold the animal bone to the Treasure school.

“He took the spirit stones and disappeared, never to be seen again.

“However, I heard from the Qi warriors of the Treasure school that after he sold the animal bone to the Treasure school, he asked them to keep it for a while, as he would come back to redeem the item at a higher price.

“Unfortunately, he didn’t show up within the agreed time.

“Plus, that animal bone wasn’t exactly valuable, so it wasn’t long before the Treasure school put it up for sale.”

After explaining the origins of the animal bone to Nie Tian without leaving out any details, Liu Yan asked, “Why do you want to know? As I recall it, your spiritual power didn’t resonate with it at all. Why are you so interested in it?”

With a smile, Nie Tian said, “Just curious, that’s all. Uncle Liu, can you please help me carry this armor up into my room?”

“You stubborn kid... I simply don’t understand why you had to buy it,” Liu Yan complained, as he picked up the sack holding the Flame Dragon Armor. “It’s really heavy! Such heavy armor... even

I wouldn't be able to move about freely in it. Not only would it not increase my battle prowess, it would even hold me back!"

After feeling the Flame Dragon Armor's weight, he stared at Nie Tian again and said, "You'd better go buy a bracelet of holding tomorrow. Otherwise you won't be able to carry things like this."

Nie Tian's eyes lit up. "Do they also sell storage spiritual tools?"

He had long since heard about the convenience of having a storage spiritual tool, but he was also aware that they were very expensive. Qi warriors with a low cultivation base would never be able to obtain such a rare item, unless they were born with extraordinary family backgrounds.

Liu Yan thought for a moment, and then said, "Yes, they do have a few. Originally, considering your current cultivation base, you wouldn't possess many items. Hence, a bracelet of holding would be a waste. However, now that you've bought that Flame Dragon Armor, which you can't even carry around by yourself, you'll probably need one of those.

"Plus, after spending such a long time looking around, it appears you haven't found anything else you like. You'll need a bracelet of holding in the future anyways, so you might as well buy one now."

Nie Tian's spirits rose immediately, and he said, "I'll go buy one tomorrow."

With these words, Liu Yan helped Nie Tian carry the bag up to his room. He simply put the sack down on the ground, turned around, and left, not saying anything else.

After he left, Nie Tian closed the door and gently opened up the sack.

The prominent outline of the dark-brown, slightly dilapidated armor gradually appeared.

Upon taking a closer look, Nie Tian saw a hole in the central chest plate of the armor, which from the look of it could fit a certain object, yet it was empty now.

Seemingly, the hole in the armor would blatantly expose the heart of the user.

The heart was the most vulnerable part of the human body. Even though it was an amazing protective set of armor, if it couldn't protect the heart, the value of the armor would be greatly reduced.

It seemed that if the missing object were to be reattached, it would not only make up for the deficiency, but also restore the armor to its original state.

Only then would the armor become truly intact.

“If my speculations are correct, the missing item should be the dragon bone.”

After staring for a good while at the hole, Nie Tian quietly took out the dragon bone from his pocket and held it close to the hole.

Only a moment later, he was convinced that his guess had been correct.

He could see that the dragon bone matched the hole perfectly, not leaving the slightest crack in between. As long as he pushed it in, the armor would return to its original, intact appearance.

He was on the verge of pressing it down when he suddenly stopped.

“No, I can’t...”

It suddenly occurred to him that just the dragon bone alone had disrupted space, and cracked open countless spacial rifts.

If another major event happened once he made the Flame Dragon Armor whole, then all of the Qi warriors currently present at the Spiritual Treasure sect would instantly notice.

Therefore, he chose to temporarily suppress his exceeding curiosity and not act rashly while he was still in the Spiritual Treasure sect.

He stroked the dragon bone for a long time while staring at the

Flame Dragon Armor, before finally putting the dragon bone back into his pocket. He decided to take his time to study the secrets of the Flame Dragon Armor and the dragon bone after returning to the Cloudsoaring sect.

That night...

Nie Tian sat cross-legged next to the Flame Dragon Armor and took out a spirit stone to start his daily cultivation.

Before long, he felt the dragon bone in the pocket at his waist gradually become warm.

Noticing the anomaly, he quietly unleashed his psychic awareness to scan his surroundings. Immediately, he discovered that millions of fine strands of energy, invisible to the naked eye, were dispersing from the pores all over his own body.

When he sent out his psychic power to track down the trivial energy strands, he found that they were gradually flowing into the Flame Dragon Armor right next to him!

“The energy...”

Silent and unmoving, he combed through his thoughts. He suddenly realized that the source of the energy was his own blood!

According to his master, all living creatures cultivated three kinds of power: spiritual power, bloodline power, and soul power.

The bloodline power, also known as the flesh power, was the kind of power that lay within the blood, flesh, and bones.

Only alien clans that possessed special bloodlines and valiant giant beings would be born with this kind of power, and be able to cultivate it to the peak.

The vast majority of the human race would never be able to obtain bloodline power that could match those special races, even if they spent their entire life cultivating it.

Hence, most human cultivators would prioritize their cultivation of spiritual power, and only after they had reached a certain stage would they start to study the mysteries of the soul power.

Back when he was in the Green Illusion dimension, Nie Tian had already realized that the energy he absorbed from the spirit beast meat was different from spiritual power, since the currents of warmth had all dispersed into his flesh and bones.

Later, after hearing his master's lessons, he was convinced that the power had definitely been flesh power.

At this moment, the flesh power hidden deeply in every part of his body slowly surfaced and began floating into the Flame Dragon Armor.

“Dragon bone!”

He suddenly realized that the dragon bone seemed to be silently urging and mobilizing his flesh power towards the Flame Dragon Armor.

He was therefore even more certain that the dragon bone was a part of the Flame Dragon Armor!

“The dragon bone is channeling my flesh power into the Flame Dragon Armor. Is it good or bad for me?” He contemplated, but couldn’t find an answer. “Ah, forget it.”

Without reading too much into the dragon bone or the Flame Dragon Armor’s small little trick, he continued to use the spirit stone to cultivate. Quite a while later when he finished, he felt exhausted.

Opening up his eyes, he looked towards the Flame Dragon Armor with rapt attention, and found that, after absorbing his flesh power the dark-brown Flame Dragon Armor was somehow more radiant, with a rosy luster appearing on its surface.

“Flame Dragon Armor...”

He didn’t take out the dragon bone, but rather extended his hand and placed it on the heart of the armor.

The moment he made contact, he suddenly felt a wondrous feeling reflected into his heart.

It was as if there was some kind of mysterious connection between himself and the armor...

This was completely new to him, as he had felt nothing but the unbearable weight when he had touched the Flame Dragon Armor earlier in the stone pavilion.

“Can it be that nourishing the Flame Dragon Armor with my flesh power enables me to resonate with it? Does it work in the same way as the dragon bone... it also requires enormous amounts of energy to display its true power?”

He suddenly remembered that when he had first encountered the dragon bone, it had also appeared as nothing but ordinary and unimpressive.

It wasn't until the dragon bone had absorbed flame power from the flamecloud gems, that it started to show its miraculous features. Only after it had drained the whole mine of its flame power, did the bone condense a drop of blood within itself and become even more incredible, teleporting him to an unknown mysterious land which ended up bringing him a great fortune.

The dragon bone needed flame power, while the Flame Dragon Armor seemed to need flesh power.

He muttered, while pondering, “It seems that if I want to understand the mysteries of the Flame Dragon Armor, a price must be paid. It's probably the best if I don't expose it very often; I really



need a bracelet of holding.”

Therefore, early the next morning, he went to Liu Yan to tell him that he wished to buy a bracelet of holding as soon as possible.

Having temporarily stored the Fire Dragon Armor in Jiang Lingzhu’s bracelet of holding, he was ready to move out, when he suddenly saw Pan Tao standing outside the building, looking discontent.

“Nie Tian, how come you are in the Spiritual Treasure sect and didn’t come see me?”

Nie Tian laughed embarrassedly. “Umm, it’s just that there’s been a lot going on in the past couple of days.”

“Yeah, I heard about you taking An Shiyi as your sworn sister.” With sigh, Pan Tao said, “An Shiyi is An Ying’s elder sister, so I also wanted to help, but...”

He shook his head and stopped talking, seeing the others from the Cloudsoaring sect approach.

“Let’s go! I’ll show you around. After all, which of them can possibly know the Spiritual Treasure sect better than I do? No matter what it is you want to buy, I know better than any of them where to find it!”

Pan Tao dragged Nie Tian and left, without bothering to talk to

the others from the Cloudsoaring sect.

# Chapter 100: Blood Moon in the Sky

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After leaving the Cloudsoaring sect residence, Pan Tao immediately said, “Nie Tian, about the matter with An Ying’s elder sister, I also wanted to help, but I didn’t have the power to do so.

“Elder Gan Kang is the fifth most influential equipment forging expert in the Treasure school. The Treasure school and the Spiritual school are separate. Even my Grandfather has no power over them.

“Moreover, Elder Gan Kang is not the only one who fancies An Shiyi.

“Although my grandfather is the grand elder of the Spiritual school, he wouldn’t be willing to involve the entire Pan clan by standing up for An Ying, just because I like An Ying.”

Pan Tao was afraid that Nie Tian thought less of him, so he explained his situation to him as soon as he got the chance, describing his helplessness.

“I understand,” Nie Tian answered.

“Oh right, what stage are you at now?” Pan Tao asked.

“The ninth level of Qi Refining. I’ve finally come to the first bottleneck.” Nie Tian laughed. “My master let me come to the Spiritual Treasure sect in hopes that I could temper myself and

step into the Lesser Heaven stage on my own.”

“The speed of your progress is simply shocking!” Pan Tao said. “If I remember correctly, when you entered the Green Illusion dimension, you were only at the sixth level. During the half a year we were in there, you advanced from the sixth level to the eighth level. Now you’ve spent another half a year to break through to the ninth level. Considering your talent and everything, it won’t take too long for you to step into the Lesser Heaven stage.”

“What about you?” asked Nie Tian.

Pan Tao laughed heartily. “Well, every single trial taker who came back alive has transcended. The Green Illusion dimension trial was so dangerous and cruel that it allowed most of us to break through our bottlenecks.

“Take An Ying, Zheng Rui, and I. The three of us were at the ninth level before we entered the Green Illusion dimension. Now, we’ve all broken through to the Lesser Heaven stage, and none of us did it with the help of the Heaven Comprehending Pill!

“We aren’t the only ones. Jiang Lingzhu, Ye Gumo, and Zheng Bin have also stepped into the Lesser Heaven stage.

“Only Nie Xian from your clan didn’t seem to accumulate sufficient experience from the trial. Furthermore, he had only recently reached the ninth level when he entered the trial. As such, he is still at the Qi Refining stage.”

Pan Tao gave a detailed explanation, sounding as if he still cherished those dreadful days in the Green Illusion dimension. He continued, “According to my grandfather, the viler and crueller the environment gets, the better one can stimulate their potential. Often only in a moment of life and death are we able to have a clear understanding of ourselves, and thereafter find the method to break through our bottlenecks.”

“Alright, I see,” said Nie Tian. “Anyways, my main objective today is to buy a bracelet of holding.”

“Oh, follow me then.” Pan Tao changed directions, and soon they arrived at a stone pavilion that sold special items.

Inside, there were many ancient documents describing spell formations, magical symbols, as well as equipment forging.

After seeing who had entered, the equipment forgers in the pavilion said, “Yee? Pan Tao? What are you doing here?”

“I’m here to help my bro choose a bracelet of holding.” Pan Tao gave a brief answer, and then took Nie Tian to a counter that sold bracelets of holding.

Six storage items were displayed inside the counter, including four bracelets and two rings.

One of the rings was red and the other was golden. Both of them were priced at ten thousand spirit stones each.

The four bracelets of different colors were only priced at five thousand spirit stones each.

Pan Tao explained before the equipment forger could, “Nie Tian, despite the rings seeming small, their holding capacity is twice that of the bracelets. Hence, their price is also double. Since you’re still at the Qi Refining stage, in my opinion, you can just choose a bracelet of holding and that’ll be enough.”

Nie Tian nodded. “Okay, bracelet it is.”

Liu Yan had also told him that a Qi warrior with a low cultivation base wouldn’t need an expensive ring of holding, since it would be a waste.

According to Liu Yan, if he hadn’t bought the Flame Dragon Armor, he wouldn’t even need a bracelet of holding either. Simply a normal cloth bag would already be more than enough to hold his necessities.

Moreover, he had just spent nine thousand spirit stones on the Flame Dragon Armor, and thus didn’t want to be too extravagant, lest his master call him a spendthrift.

Nie Tian took out Wu Ji’s command medallion, and handed it over to the equipment forger behind the sales counter while pointing towards one of the storage bracelets. “I want that dark-yellow one.”

After grabbing the command medallion, the equipment forger took out the bracelet that Nie Tian selected and handed it over to him.

At the same time, Pan Tao explained the usage of the storage bracelet to Nie Tian, telling him that he only needed to use a wisp of his psychic power or spiritual power to store or withdraw items.

He put the bracelet on his arm and, following Pan Tao's instructions, stored a few spirit stones inside.

As the wisp of Nie Tian's psychic awareness swam into the storage bracelet, he realized that the inside of the bracelet was a bright, misty space that was approximately a third of the size of a stone room.

Considering that his current belongings consisted of only a few spirit stones, a dragon bone, a command medallion, and the Flame Dragon Armor, the space was already more than enough.

Even if he added in the banner that he had left with Jiang Lingzhu, they would only take up a small part of the space inside the bracelet of holding. Therefore, it could definitely satisfy his current needs.

"Here's your command medallion." The equipment forger handed the command medallion back to him. Nie Tian grabbed it and threw it into the bracelet of holding.

He wasn't in a hurry to leave. Curious about all of the special items that they sold in the pavilion, he started to look around.

When he first arrived, he had assumed that they would only sell spiritual weapons during the Treasure Convention.

Later, he realized that other than spiritual weapons, they also had spiritual armor and medicinal pills for sale.

Only today, with Pan Tao as his guide, did he learn that they also sold books, dilapidated ancient scrolls, eccentric spell formation pieces, as well as fragmented cultivation incantations.

Many of the items in this building were incomplete, but there was a huge variety, which allowed Nie Tian to have a new understanding of the different kinds of objects that Qi warriors would have on them.

Wandering around in the stone pavilion, Nie Tian was pondering over what to buy as his last purchase. "I didn't get the Spiritfount Pill. All I got was the Flame Dragon Armor and a storage bracelet. According to my master, I still can buy one more item."

Pan Tao was getting impatient. "That's about all there is. There is nothing more to see here. A lot of the things here are defective or incomplete. You wouldn't need those ancient documents, spell formation pieces, and scrolls about ancient Qi warriors, because your master is the true expert in those fields. The things here are all items that have been assessed by our sect to be of little worth.



“Even if these things were complete and not damaged, your master still wouldn’t even spare them a glance.

“He is the real expert. If you take this rubbish back, he’ll scold you for sure!”

“Oh, is that so...” Nie Tian nodded and finally agreed to leave. After leaving, Pan Tao dragged Nie Tian to idle about in the Spiritual Treasure sect.

“See those three mountain peaks? They form the most important part of the grand spell formation of the Spiritual Treasure sect, which protects the entire sect. It’s called ‘Heaven Burning Earth Flame’. Under those three mountain peaks, there are tunnels that lead right to the core of the earth, constantly drawing blazing flames from there.

“Once the grand spell formation is activated, raging flames will shoot up into the sky, forming a dome of raging fire that envelops the entire Spiritual Treasure sect.

“Even Qi warriors at the Profound Realm stage would need to go through a lot of difficulty to penetrate that layer of flame. It’s impossible for Qi warriors below the Profound Realm to go through that flame ward into the valley.”

“ ... ”

Pan Tao appeared very proud as he introduced the formidable power of the grand spell formation 'Heaven Burning Earth Flame.

The sky gradually darkened, and the two agreed to meet up again the next day to visit the stone pavilion, where the most intense auctions would be held for the most valuable spiritual items.

After returning, Nie Tian got the Flame Dragon Armour back from Jiang Lingzhu and stored it into his bracelet of holding.

Fearing that once Yuan Feng's banner was exposed, Sang Bing and Yuan Xian from the Grayvale sect might sense its faint fluctuations, he told Jiang Lingzhu to give it back to him after they left the Spiritual Treasure sect.

Moreover, Nie Tian didn't have a particularly strong interest in that banner, hence wasn't in a hurry to get it back.

Later that night, he practiced his routine cultivation with a spirit stone. He also intentionally took out the dragon bone and Flame Dragon Armor from his bracelet of holding and placed them next to him.

Not long after he started his cultivation, he felt the bone growing warm, as well as his flesh power flowing towards the Flame Dragon Armor little by little.

After an unknown period of time, he sensed an inexplicably oppressive feeling weighing down on his mind, and felt that it

required more effort than usual to cultivate with a spirit stone.

Then, he stopped and looked towards the full moon outside his window, feeling that the cool and clear moon seemed to have a faint layer of blood-colored mist covering it.

It was also in this moment that Wu Xing's deep shout suddenly resounded from the sixth floor of the stone pavilion. "Something is wrong with the fluctuations of space!"

A moment later, Wu Xing walked down the stairs. Nie Tian, Jiang Lingzhu, and Ye Gumo also stepped out of their rooms, and stood in the veranda, looking puzzled.

Liu Yan, Shi Yi, and Luo Xin also came down from the fifth floor with serious expressions on their faces.

Liu Yan took out a stone that was covered in small holes from his inner pocket, and was about to speak to it.

CRUNCH!

Before he could utter a word, the Sound Stone cracked into pieces.

Immediately, fear stretched across Liu Yan's face.

Wu Xing's face was as cold and pale as snow. He suddenly looked

up towards the moon and shouted out, “We’re in big trouble!”

Everyone followed suit and looked over toward it. The full moon, that was previously as bright as a silver plate, seemed to have been smeared over by a dense layer of blood, becoming scarlet and devilish.

“The Blood sect!” Luo Xin’s voice slightly trembled.

Wu Xing shook his head and sighed, “The Blood sect would definitely not dare to invade just by themselves. The Hell sect and Ghost sect must have sent out all of their experts too!”

Luo Xin couldn’t help but shriek. “Ahhh?!”

In this moment, many experts in the other stone pavilions had also sensed the anomaly. Some of them followed one another into the street, and others shouted out loudly from their stone balconies.

“Blood moon in the sky!”

“It’s the Blood sect!”

“Oh, damn!”

Nie Tian glanced around, and realized that everyone’s faces were filled with terror and anxiety.

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FYI, here's a list of the cultivation levels.

Qi Refining

Lesser Heaven

Heaven

Greater Heaven

Worldly Realm

Profound Realm

Soul Realm

Void Domain

Saint Domain

God Domain

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